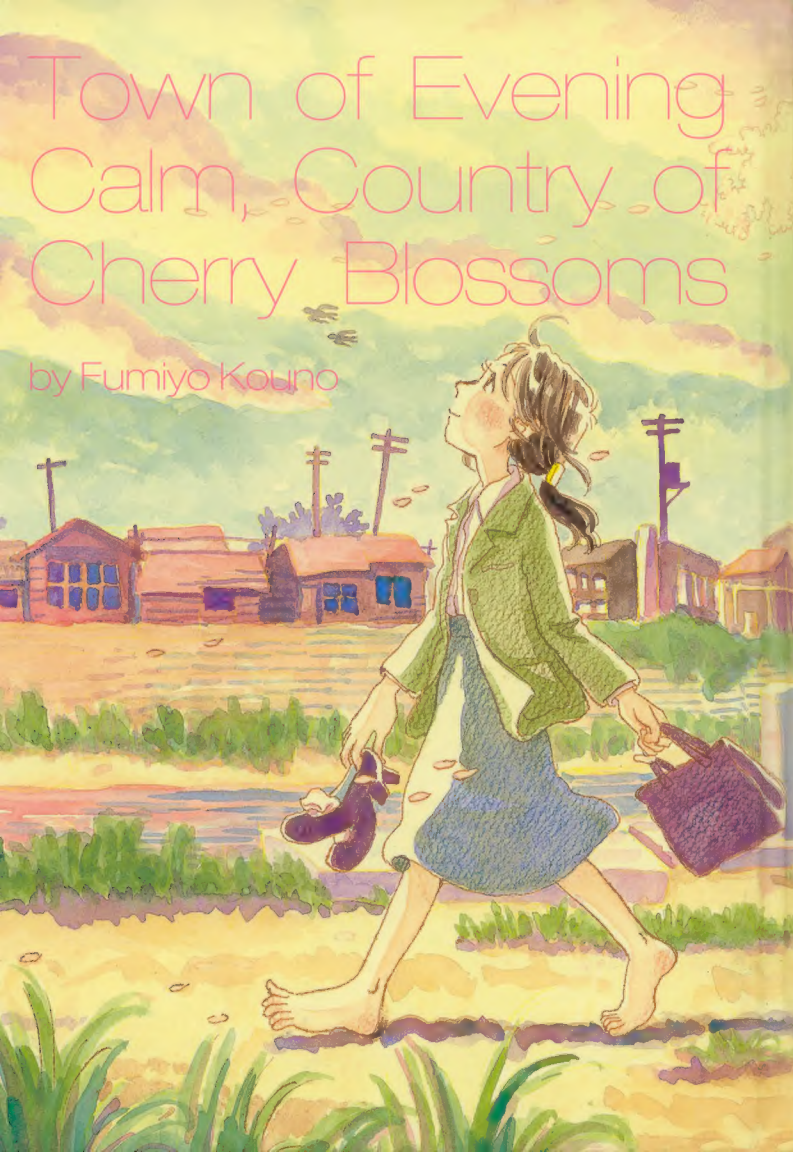
Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms

by Fumiyo Kouno



Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms by Fumiyo Kouno

What impact did World War II and the dropping of the atomic bomb have on the common people of Japan? Through the eyes of an average woman living in 1955, Japanese artist Fumiyo Kouno answers these questions. This award-winning manga appears in an English translation for the first time. Fumiyo Kouno's light, free style of drawing evokes a tender reflection of this difficult period in Hiroshima's postwar past. As the characters continue with everyday life, the shadow of the war and the atomic bombing linger ghostlike in the background.

A widely embraced best seller in Japan, *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* is the winner of several prestigious awards including Grand Prize at the 8th Japan Media Arts Festival (2004), New Life Award at the 9th Osamu Tezuka Cultural Prizes (2005). *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* is made up of interconnected short stories; the first is a love story entitled *Town of Evening Calm*; followed by the two-part story *Country of Cherry Blossoms*.

"*Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* is a profoundly moral work and, even better, a singularly humane one." – Comic World News

"...well worth your attention" – The Comics Journal

"...undeniably moving. It will leave an impression." – Aint It Cool News

"Top 10 Manga for 2007" – Publisher's Weekly

"Best Comics of 2007" – New York Magazine

"Grand Prize, Manga Division" – 2004 Japan Media Arts Festival

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51495
9 780867 197211

STOP! This is the back side of the book, please read from the front.

LAST GASP
inPRESS

Scanner, Cleaner: Dille
www.illuminati-manga.com
#illuminati-manga@irc.irchighway.net
If you liked it, buy it!

Town of Evening Calm Country of Cherry Blossoms

by Fumiyo Kouno

Town of Evening Calm 5
Yūnagi no Machi

Country of Cherry Blossoms 1 37
Sakura no Kuni Part 1

Country of Cherry Blossoms 2 53
Sakura no Kuni Part 2

Yūnagi is the term for a windless calm that settles in during the evening after sea breezes die down and before inland winds begin to blow.

To all the people who love this world—in which lies Japan in which lies the city of Hiroshima.

Town of Evening Calm

Yûnagi no Machi

YES, NOW GIVE THE THREAD A BIT MORE SLACK.

LIKE THIS?

ALL DONE!

IT'S PERFECT!

Fabrics and Goods Futaba Clothier

OH...

NOW YOU CAN MAKE THE PATTERN A BIT SLIMMER FOR YOURSELF, MINAMI.

I JUST ASKED MOTHER WHAT TO DO.

THANKS TO YOU, I SAVED MYSELF SOME MONEY!

HUH ?

RIGHT, UCHIKOSHI ?

TOO BAD. IT REALLY SUITS YOU.

NO... BESIDES, I'M SO CLUMSY.

WELL ...

UM...

JUST SAY SHE WOULD LOOK NICE IN IT!

FURUTA, YOU'RE ASKING THE WRONG GUY.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING.

YEAH, THIS IS NO TIME FOR A FASHION SHOW.

OH, IT'S GETTING LATE.

HEY, WAIT!

BUT...

I'LL GO WASH IT.

THANKS !

SURE, GO AHEAD.

FURUTA, CAN I HAVE THIS BAMBOO WRAPPER?

BYE!

ボーシ　廣島堂

カバン・靴

Tenth Anniversary
of the Atomic Bomb
Working
together
to make the
World
Conference
Against
Atomic Bombs
a success.
Hiroshima Committee
for the World
Conference Against
Atomic Bombs

THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD, OTOMI-SAN.

WAIT FOR ME, MIDORI!

BUT YOU'RE ALIVE...

NOT EVEN THE BUDDHA ...

COULD'VE KNOWN IT TO BE TRUE.

Resist Eviction!

Resist Eviction!

Hirano Tailoring and Mending

HI, MINAMI.

I'M HOME!

Hirano Tailoring and Mending

5

30.7.1

Fujimi and Minami Hirano

Asahi Ishikawa, Mito City

FURUTA FINISHED THAT DRESS. SHE WAS REALLY HAPPY.

THAT SO?

SIT UP, MINAMI. MY, WHAT MANNERS.

SO HE JOINED THE BASEBALL TEAM.

MAYBE HE'LL PLAY FOR THE CARP SOMEDAY.

HORRIBLE HAND-WRITING AS USUAL.

.....

.....

sip

Hmm, post-cards, post-cards...

I'LL WRITE BACK TO HIM!

Fshhh

OH, IT'S RAINING.

I HAVE TO PAY BACK AUNT ISHIKAWA FOR MY TUITION TOO...

WE'LL SAVE UP AND GO VISIT HIM!

JUST WAIT, MOTHER...

YES ...

HAVE TO TEND TO THAT ROOF.

Plp

Plp

Plip

Plip

Plip

YES ?

MINAMI !

I CAME BY BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T COME TO WORK. SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN BED?

HI, UCHIKOSHI ...

OH...

IS SHE OKAY?

I SEE.

OH ... MY MOTHER WASN'T FEELING WELL, SO I TOOK HER TO THE HOSPITAL.

WELL, THIS HAPPENS QUITE OFTEN...

HOPE YOU UNDER-STAND, MY MOTHER'S SLEEPING IN THERE...

AND IT'S SHINY INSIDE BECAUSE OF LAST NIGHT'S RAIN.

SHINY?

Hirano Tailoring and Mending

.....

.....

HA HA HA ...

FROM THE TRAILS THE SLUGS LEFT.

.....

AND DO YOU THINK HASEGAWA WILL GET 100 WINS?

SURE THING.

YOU THINK KANEYAMA 'LL STEAL 400 BASES THIS YEAR?

I'M GOING TO MAKE A PAIR OF ZORI. I DON'T WANT TO WEAR OUT MY SHOES WALKING TO AND FROM WORK.

OH ...

SAY, MINAMI, WHY'RE YOU COLLECTING BAMBOO WRAPPERS?

SO THAT'S WHERE YOU GET THIS UNUSUAL VEGETABLE.

YOU HAVE A BROTHER OVER THERE...?

.....

TO SEE MY LITTLE BROTHER ASAHI.

THEN WE'RE GOING TO MITO.

HAVE TO SAVE MONEY.

I THINK YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD WIFE.

I...

YES, BUT IT IS TASTY.

YOU COME FROM A FARMING FAMILY, RIGHT? YOU PROBABLY DON'T EAT THINGS LIKE THIS.

NO, THIS IS A LOCAL DELICACY.

WHAT ?!

.....

BYE NOW!

I STILL HAVE TO MAKE MY ROUNDS.

I'M NEVER GETTING MARRIED !

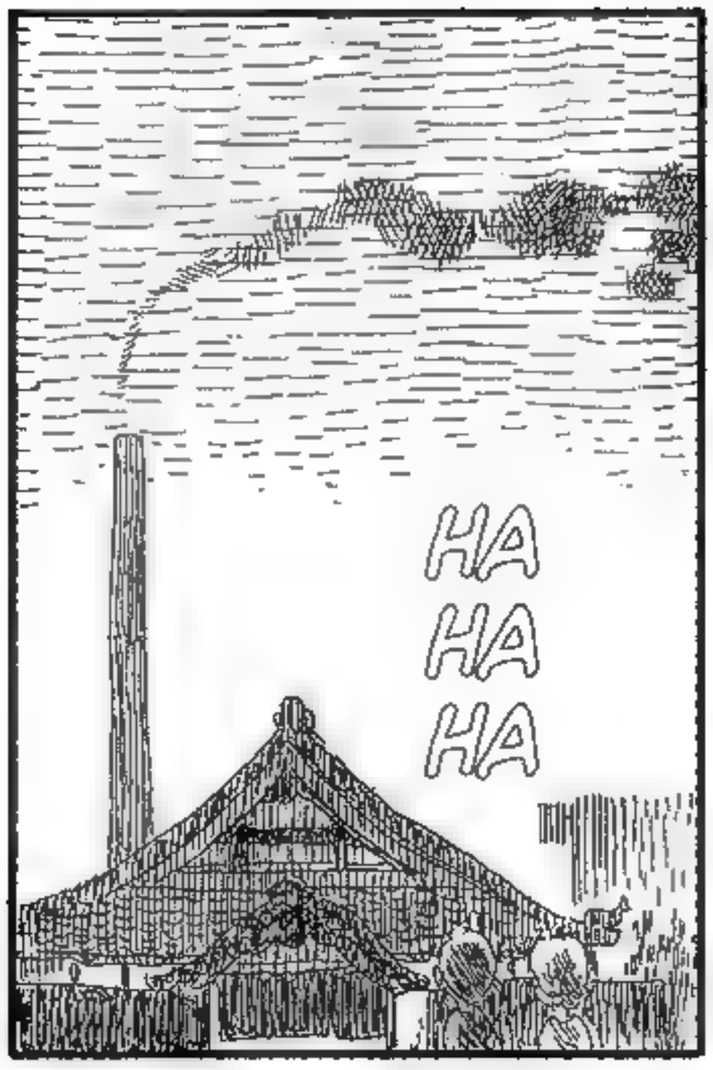
NOW GO AWAY!

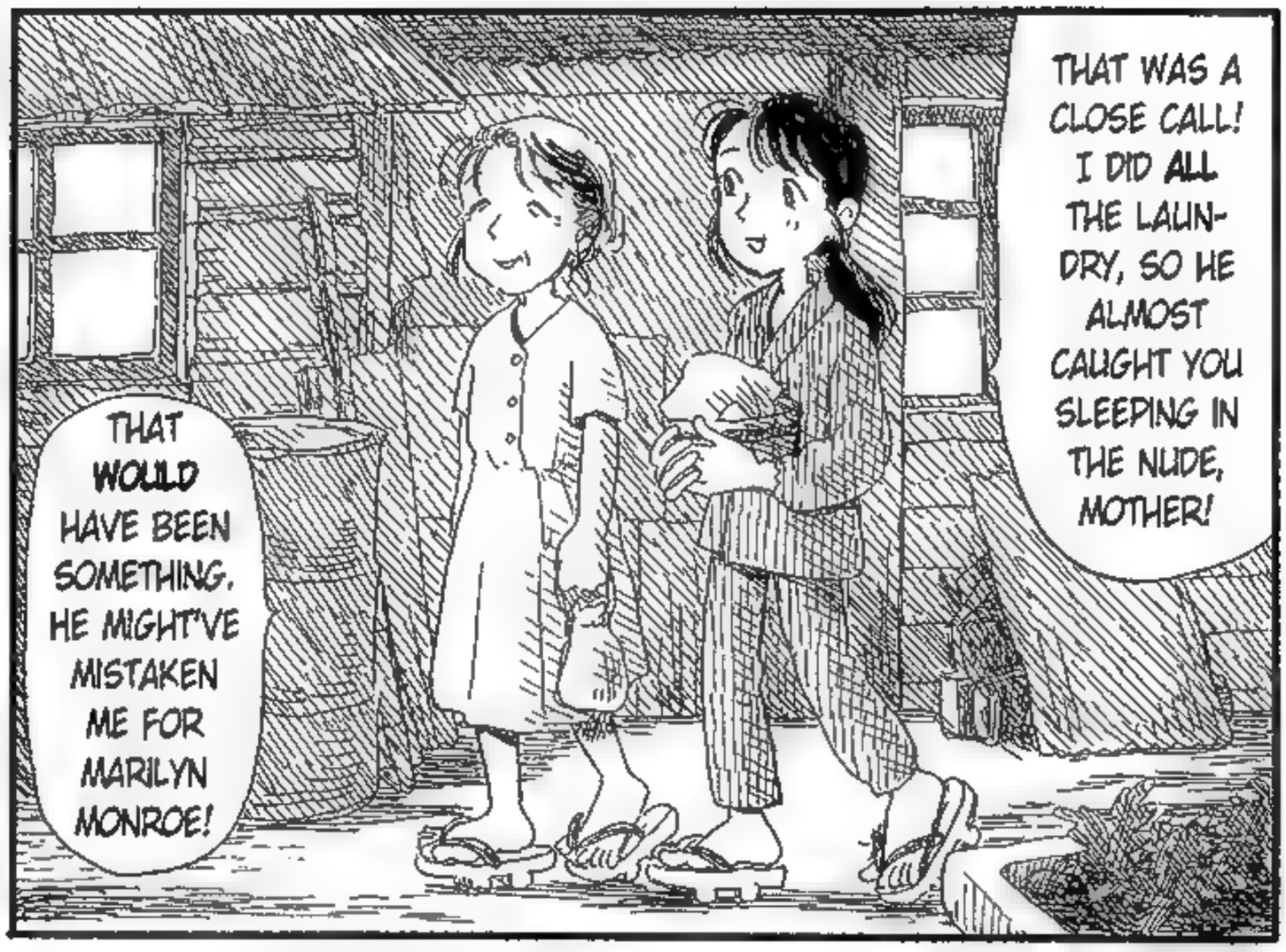
SHUT UP!

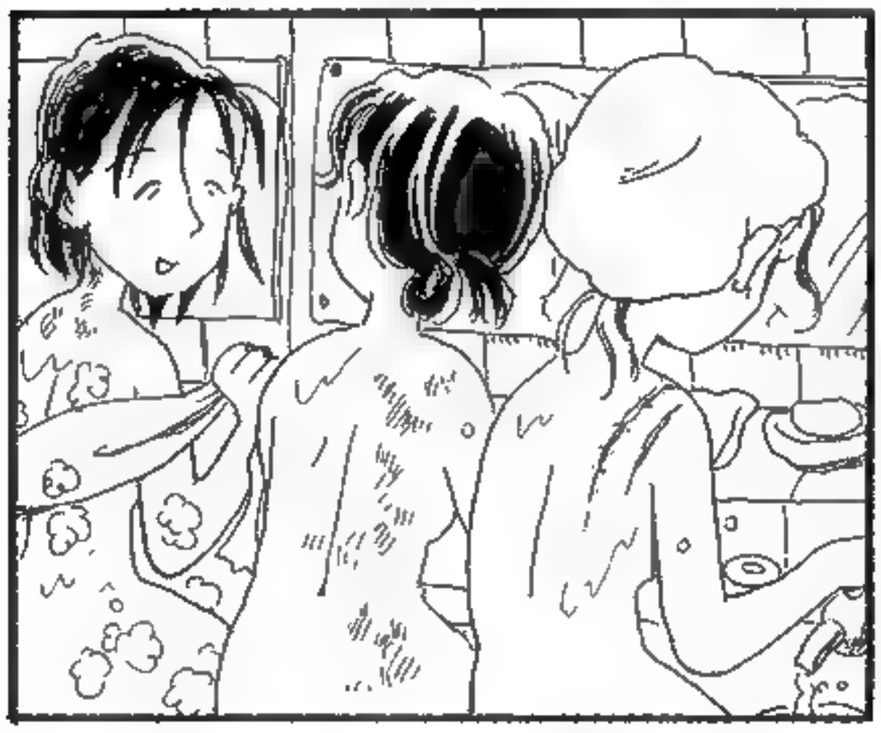
MINAMI, WAS THAT A VISITOR ?

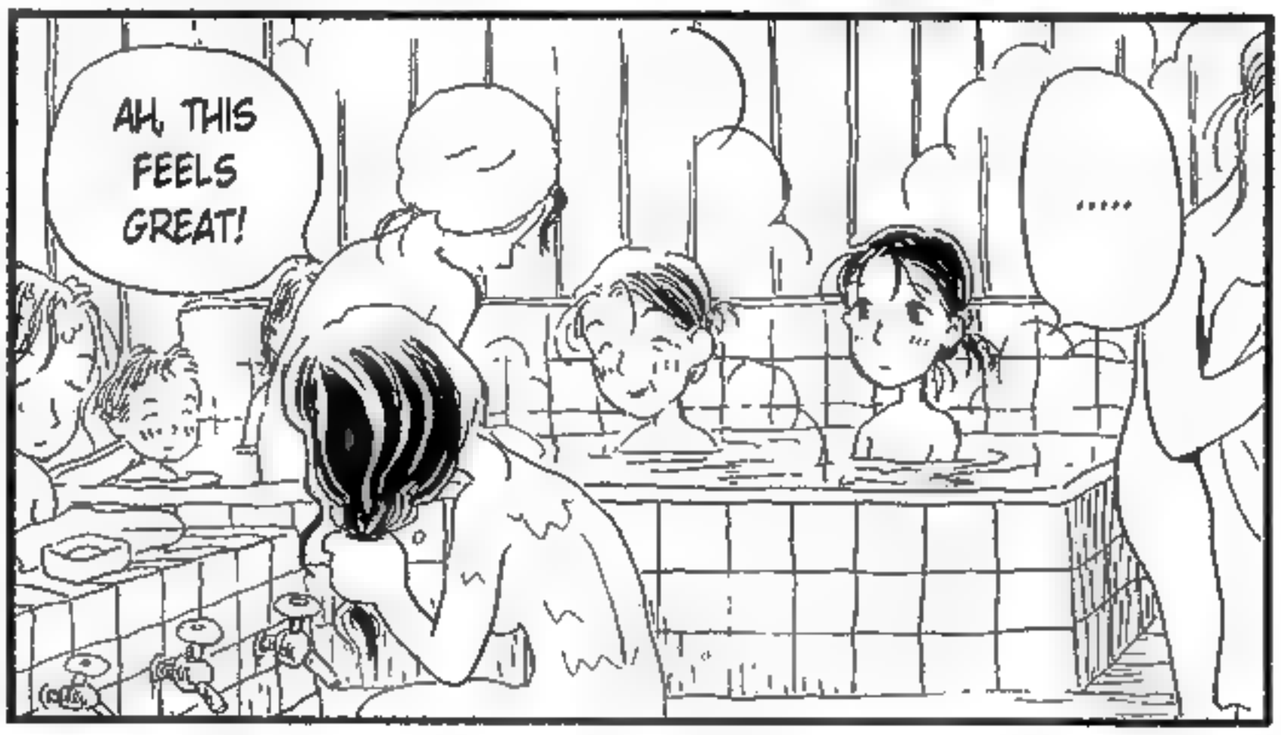
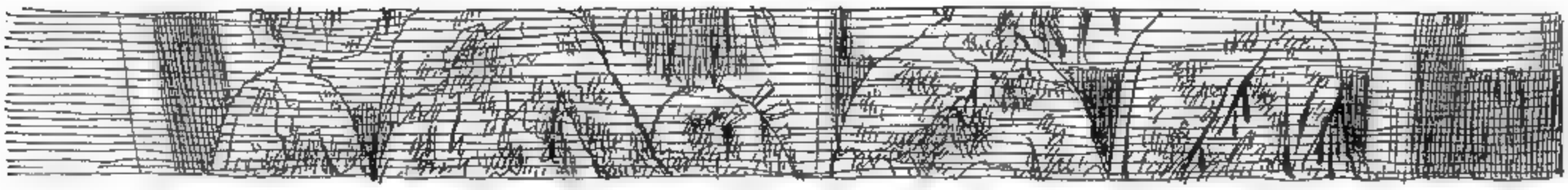
UMM, YEAH...

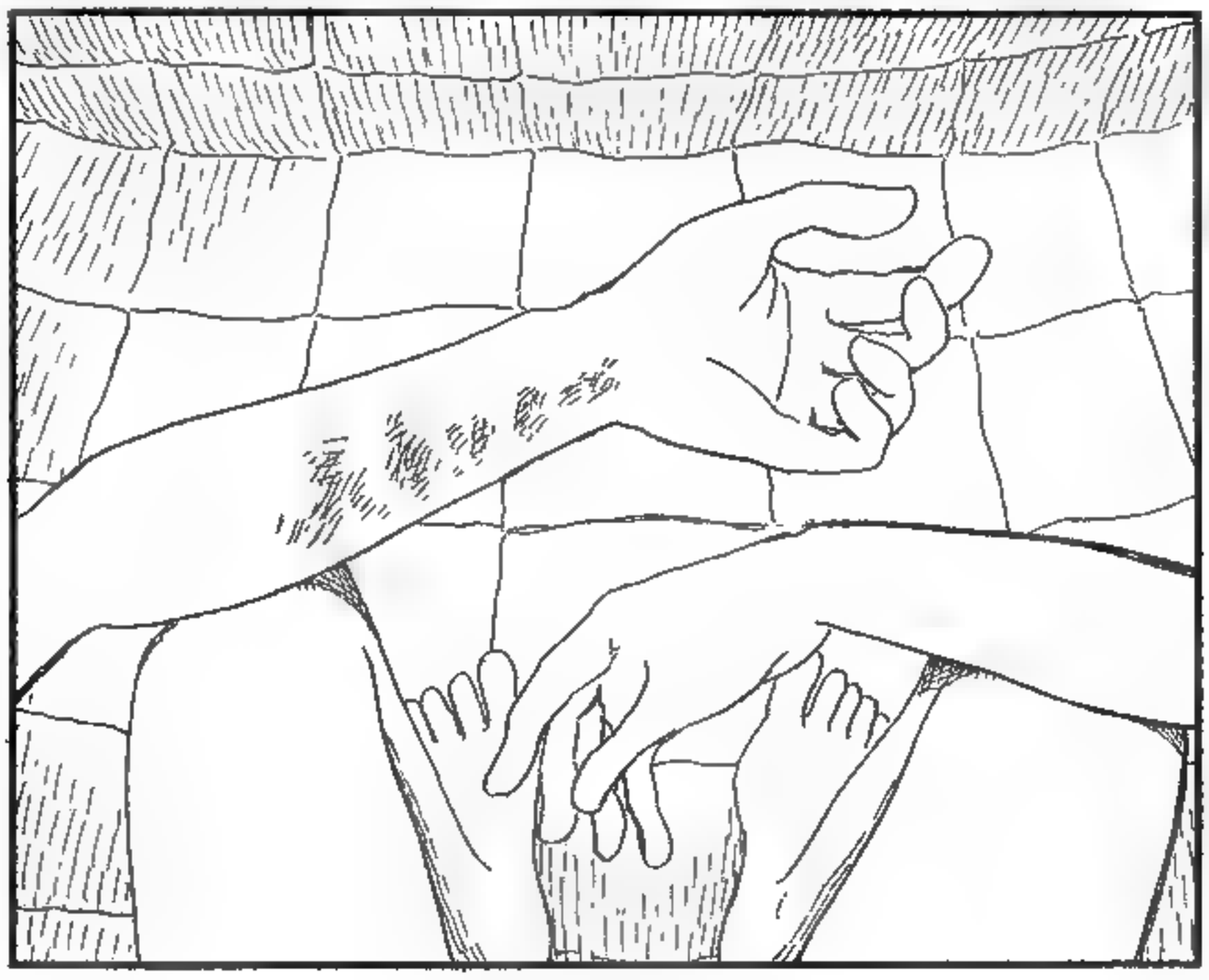
OH, UH... SORRY, SORRY!

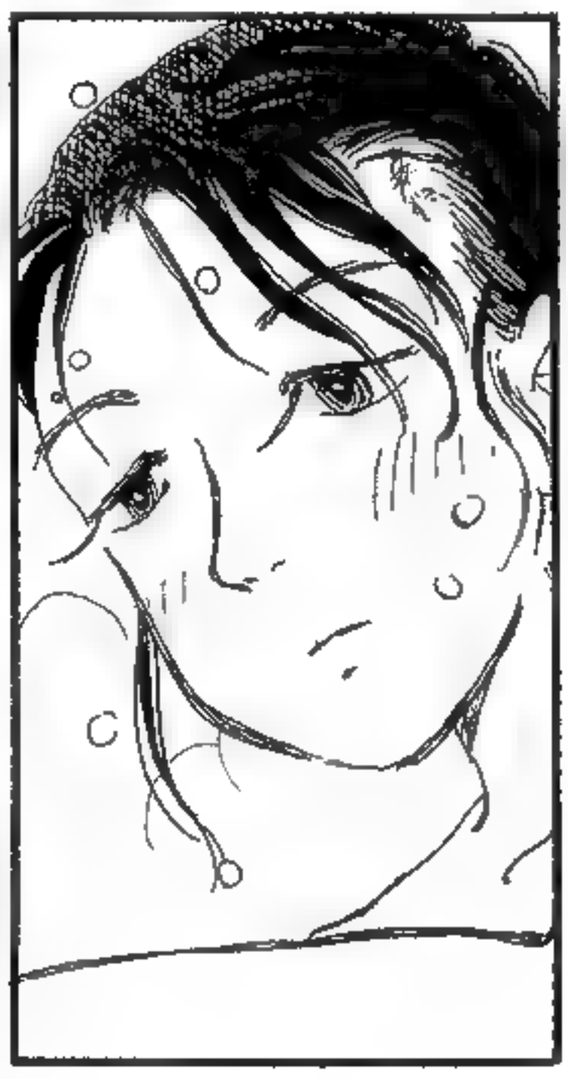



THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL! I DID ALL THE LAUN-DRY, SO HE ALMOST CAUGHT YOU SLEEPING IN THE NUDE, MOTHER!
THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING. HE MIGHT'VE MISTAKEN ME FOR MARILYN MONROE!









There's something not quite right about everyone in this town.

That's what I've come to realize.

MINAMI ...

MINAMI ?!

...

The most terrifying thing is how it changed me. I've become the sort of person one ought to wish dead.

All I know is that somebody wanted us dead.

They wanted us to die, but we survived.

Nobody talks about it.

I don't really understand what happened, even to this day.

OH, DEAR. THIS IS WHY I CAN'T LET MYSELF STAY BEDRIDDEN FOR LONG.

I SOAKED FOR TOO LONG AND FELT FAINT.

LET'S HURRY HOME.

OH, NO! OUR RADIO SHOW HAS ALREADY STARTED!

.....

WHEW.

Fabrics and Goods Futaba

大空建設

野屋

I STILL HAVE A LOT TO DO BECAUSE OF THAT DAY I WAS OUT LAST WEEK.

OKAY, I'LL BE LEAVING THEN.

The power of peace for Hiroshima

UCHIKOSHI ?

OH...

...

UM... IT'S A GIFT FOR THIS GIRL I LIKE.

.....

SURE.

WHAT PERFECT TIMING. I NEED YOUR ADVICE.

IS THAT WHY YOU ALWAYS TALK TO ME ABOUT THE CARP?

HOW RUDE.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN THE CARP AND RIKIDOZAN THE WRESTLER.

HMM ...

WHAT ?

HOW ABOUT THIS?

HEY, LOOK!

NO, I'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO WORK OVER-TIME AND

OH, FOR-GET IT !

HE'S GOING TO BE WRESTLING AT THE STADIUM HERE SOON. ARE YOU GOING?

WOULD YOU PREFER I TALK ABOUT RIKIDOZAN ?

SEE YOU TOMORROW, BYE.

I'LL TAKE THIS, PLEASE.

OH, GIVE ME A BREAK!

A HAND-KER-CHIEF?

IF SHE REJECTS YOU, THEN YOU CAN CRY INTO IT.

MINAMI, WAIT UP!

THANK YOU...

OH!

I HAD MY GRANDMOTHER BACK HOME MAKE THESE. I HOPE YOU CAN USE THEM.

Futaba Clothier

AND HERE...

Futaba Clothier

IN RETURN FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY THE OTHER DAY.

Futaba Clothier

?

OH, GOOD.

THESE ARE VERY GREAT! COMFORT-ABLE.

OOPS ...

DON'T WANT TO GET THEM DIRTY. I'LL USE THEM AS A MODEL TO MAKE ANOTHER PAIR.

TAKING THEM OFF?

YOU'RE NOT GIVING IT BACK?

THAT'S OKAY.

I'M SORRY.

THE HANDKER-CHIEF, YOU'RE KEEPING IT?

THANK YOU.

YES...

I'M SORRY...

NO...

That's not for you.

I'M SORRY...

MINAMI..

A voice told me—you don't belong there in that world.

AH!

My classmates were stuck under a fence. I told them I would get help, but I never made it back.

At an emergency shelter, I came upon a group of people sitting in silence. Round and swollen, they didn't look human.

My mother was among them.

MINAMI ...

WHAT ABOUT KASUMI?

AND MIDORI?

WHERE'S YOUR FATHER?

I need water! Help me, please!

August Sixth.

I don't know how many people I left to die that day.

That was ten years ago.

That bridge—I came to it on the eighth. I couldn't find my father nor my little sister Midori. The stench was driving me mad. Kasumi and I threw rubble at the horde of floating corpses in the river.

We just kept doing it.

August Seventh, I found my sister Kasumi.

It no longer bothered me to walk over the dead. Sometimes I stepped on them. Burnt flesh would peel and I would slip.

The ground was so hot my shoes melted and got stuck.

Calmly, I picked out a woman whose body had not rotted away and stole her wooden geta. I had become a different person.

GASP.

GASP.

A little bird with charred wings hopped along the ground. I noticed burns on my left arm, a barrette seared into my hair.

I'M HOME.

Mother never saw what happened that day.

...

WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE COVERED IN DIRT.

Her face swelled up and she couldn't open her eyes for a month.

I FELL ...

I'M GOING TO SLEEP.

I'M TIRED.

If only I could forget it all.

I remember everything — everything about my beloved city, everything about all those people.

Whenever I think I'm happy, whenever I see beauty ...

And I get pulled back to the day I lost it all.

That voice calls out to me, "You don't belong here in this world."

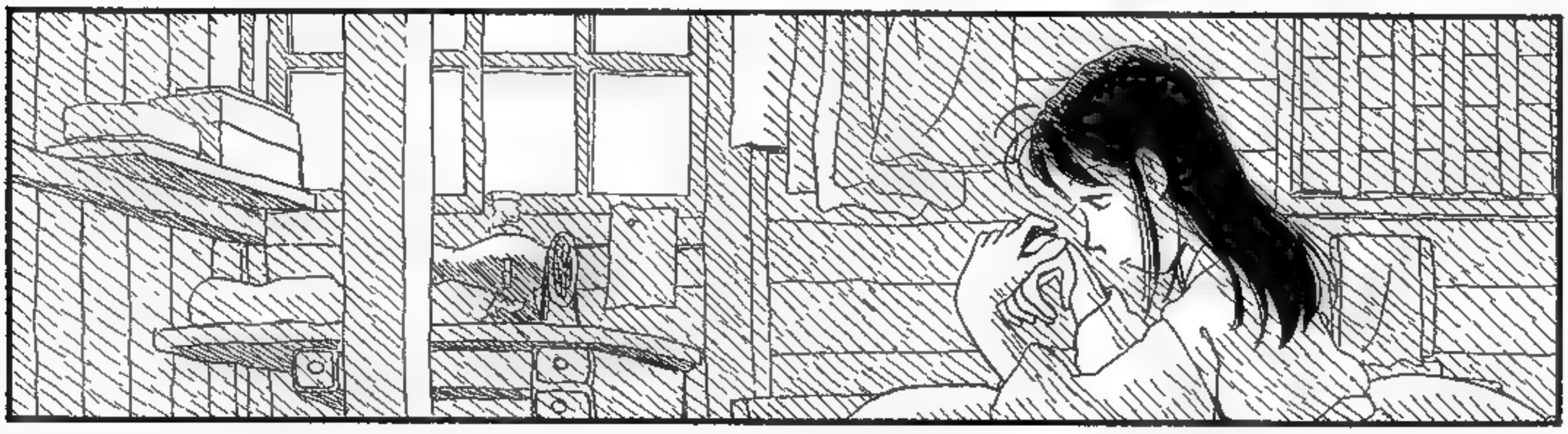
My younger brother Asahi had been sent to our aunt's house in the country where he would be safe. When we went back for him five years later, we barely knew him anymore. He told us in my aunt's local dialect that he didn't want to go back to Hiroshima. And because my aunt and uncle so desired, they adopted him.

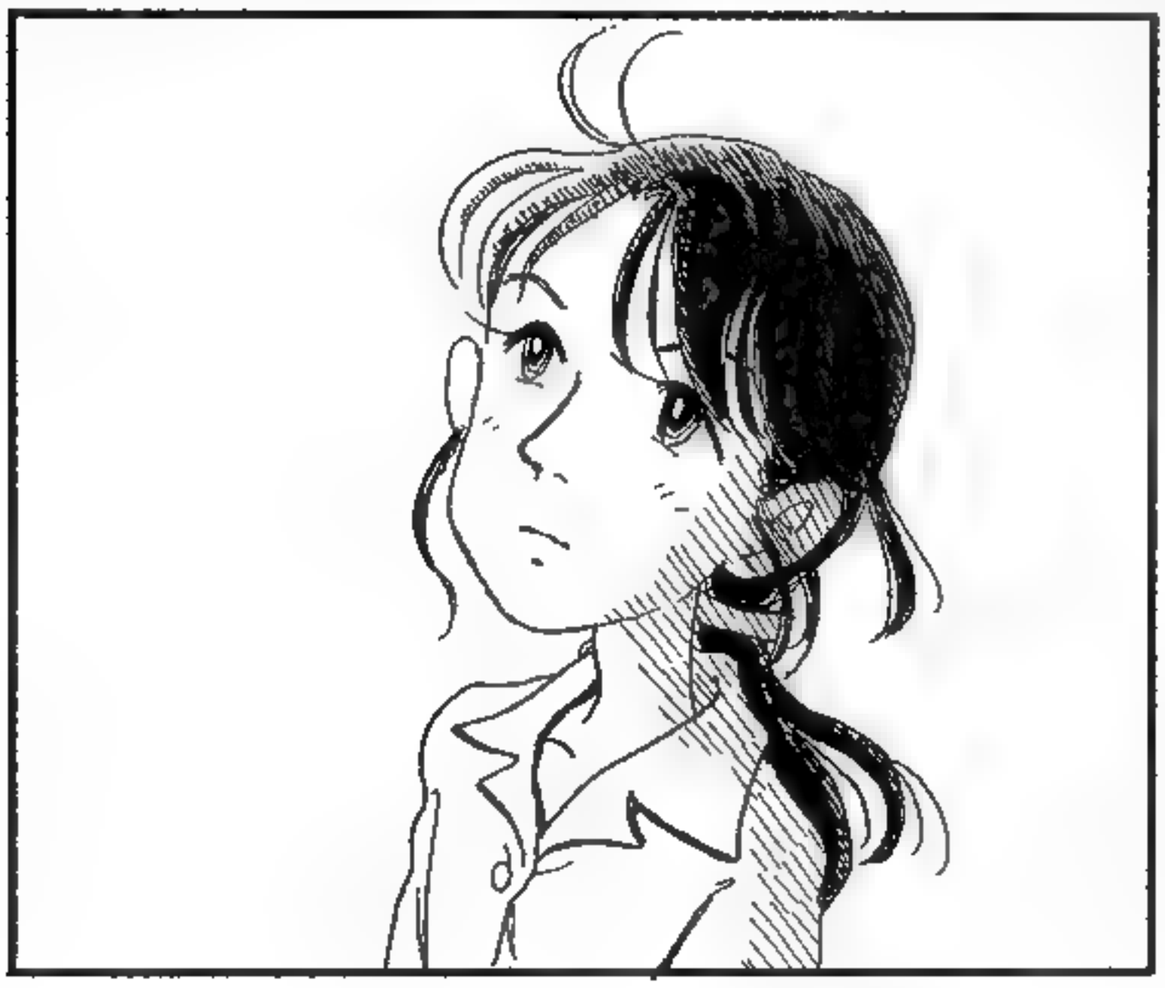
Father was at work when the bomb hit. We found out that he died the next day.

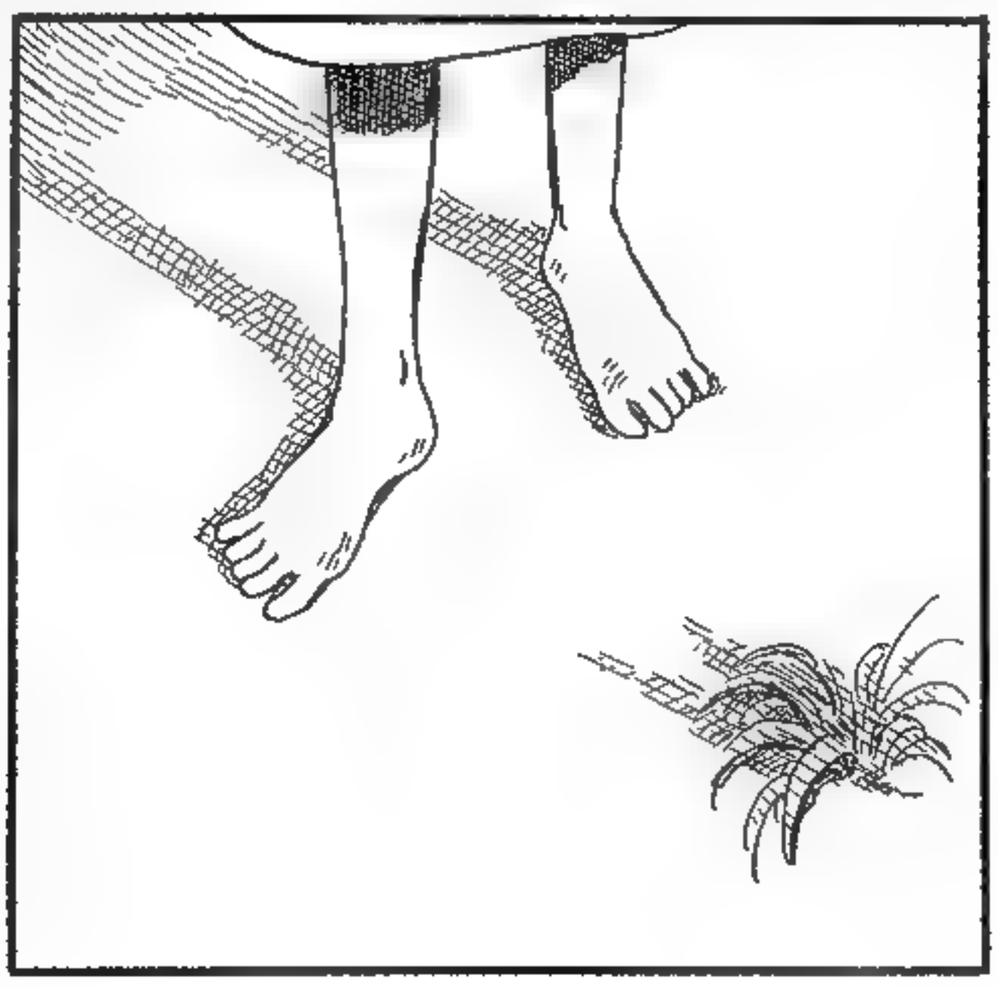
And Midori never did come back to us.

A week after that day, I brought my mother back home. Our house was half destroyed, and we slept in the entryway.

If only I could forget that all this had happened.







大空

GOOD MORNING...

.....

UMM...

I'M SORRY. IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

PLEASE TELL ME THAT IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO BE HERE IN THIS WORLD.

PLEASE...

MAYBE THEN I WON'T THINK ABOUT MY SISTERS AND THE OTHERS AND FEEL GUILTY ABOUT HAVING MET YOU.

LET ME TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO.

MAYBE THEN, I CAN MAKE SENSE OF WHY I'M STILL HERE. WHY I SURVIVED.

.....

MY GRAND-MOTHER ALWAYS WANTS TO DO SOME-THING FOR THE PEOPLE HERE. THAT'S WHY SHE WOVE THOSE ZORI SANDALS FOR YOU.

I HAD AN AUNT HERE WHO DIED BECALISE OF THE BOMB.

I THOLIGHT THAT MIGHT BE IT.

I SEE ...

I'M SO RELIEVED, ALL MY MUSCLES HAVE GONE LIMP.

MINAMI ...

OH...

...THANK YOU FOR SURVIVING.

The muscles in my body stayed limp after that.

Uchikoshi started talking to me with more familiarity.

THAT'S WHAT I TRIED TO TELL YOU.

YOU'RE NOT GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING, ARE YOU?

WHAT'S THIS?!

Is this right?

MAY BE SO.

YOU'RE JUST FATIGUED.

I couln't go to work the next day.

YOU GET SOME REST NOW.

THANKS FOR VISITING.

TODAY MIGHT BE OUR LAST DAY TOGETHER.

WE'LL CHERISH THESE MEMORIES.

PROMISES MADE ON A STREET LINED WITH TREES.

LET'S GO HOME, JUST THE TWO OF US.

THE MOON GLOWS SO BRIGHT...

LET'S TAKE THE LONG WAY HOME TONIGHT.

It was the first time I heard him sing.

By morning, I could no longer stand.

In the evening, the doctor gave me a vitamin shot.

WHAT COULD THIS BE?

And by afternoon, I could no longer keep food down.

DOES THAT MEAN UCHIKOSHI WILL GO BALD TOO?

YOUR VISITOR REMINDED ME OF YOUR FATHER AS A YOUNG MAN.

Mother made porridge for breakfast.

My sister Kasumi became bedridden two months after that day.

A LONG LIFE...

YES.

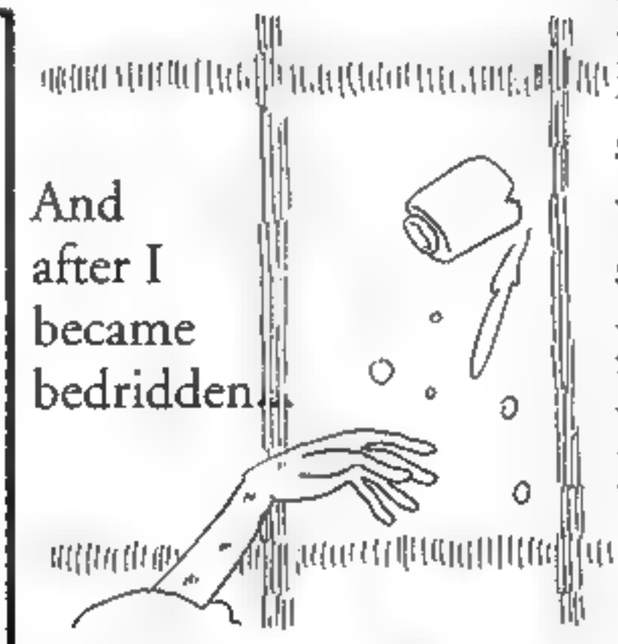
LIVE A LONG LIFE.

MINAMI ...

ZWM ZWM ZWM

.....

Late at night, I coughed up dark blood.



And after I became bedridden...

Her body covered in purple splotches, she would suddenly start hitting and yelling at us. That's how she was as she passed away.

...Mother and I stopped talking about Kasumi.

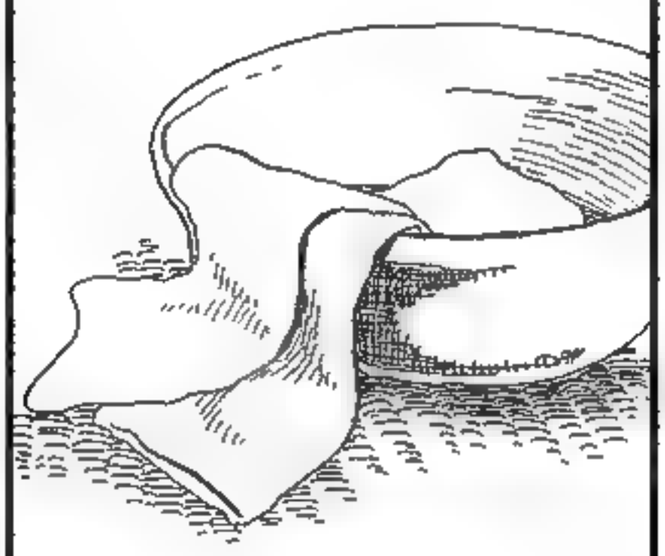
GET BETTER SOON, MINAMI.

WE'LL ALL GO TO MIYAJIMA AGAIN.

From the next day on I had many visitors.

HANG IN THERE.

Now I understand what my sister really meant. She wanted a long life for herself.



And then I wasn't able to see anymore.

WHO WAS THAT?

I BROUGHT FLOWERS.

MOTHER ...

Someone came and held my hand in silence.

I knew whose hand it was.

I didn't want to get any blood on that dress we made together.

MINAMI, IT'S ME FURUTA.

I tried to avoid touching Furuta.

YOUR COWORKERS ARE HERE TO VISIT YOU.

Pain...

It's been ten years. I wonder if the people who dropped the bomb are pleased with themselves—"Yes! Got another one!"

I think I'm losing my hair, but I don't have the strength to raise my hand to my head... I'll try tomorrow... Tomorrow...

It takes all I have to hold onto the bedpan.

I coughed up something solid again.

It's not just blood, I'm spitting up my insides.

Happy now?

MINAMI ...

I feel wind.

The evening calm, the yûnagi— has faded?

This isn't fair.

I thought I was one of the survivors.

ASAHI AND YOUR AUNT ARE HERE.

MINAMI!

This story isn't over yet.

World Conference Against Atomic Bombs The power of peace For Hiroshima 8/6 Hiroshima 8/13 Osaka

Hiroshima Preparatio

No matter how many times the yûnagi fades, this story won't ever end.

0408 31

Country of Cherry Blossoms 1

Sakura no Kuni Part 1

GOEMON!
MIKKI ...
YOSHI ...
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
Na-
na-
mi
YES. AND YOU, NANAMI?
TOKO !
GOING HOME?
WHAT ?!
...SO WE'LL CALL YOU GOEMON.
LET'S SEE... YOUR LAST NAME'S ISHIKAWA ...
YEAH, THAT'S A GOOD ONE!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

YOUR NEW CLASSMATES CALL YOU GOEMON, RIGHT?

OUR CLASS GOT AN ASSIGNMENT TO WRITE ABOUT "OUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE."

I MEAN... **GOEMON** ?

利根

JUST DON'T DOODLE IN MY BOOKS AGAIN, NANAMI.

IF I FORGET A TEXTBOOK, I CAN BORROW IT FROM YOU.

I GUESS THERE **ARE** BENEFITS OF US BEING IN DIFFERENT CLASSES.

YEAH? THEN MAYBE THEY'LL ASSIGN IT IN OUR CLASS, TOO.

...

I'M HOME.

HOW WAS SCHOOL, TOKO.

SPLSH

I'M HOME.

203

Nanami Nagio and Asahi Ishikawa

Fujimi Hirano

...

Journal

Name: Nanami Ishikawa
Grade 5 Room 4

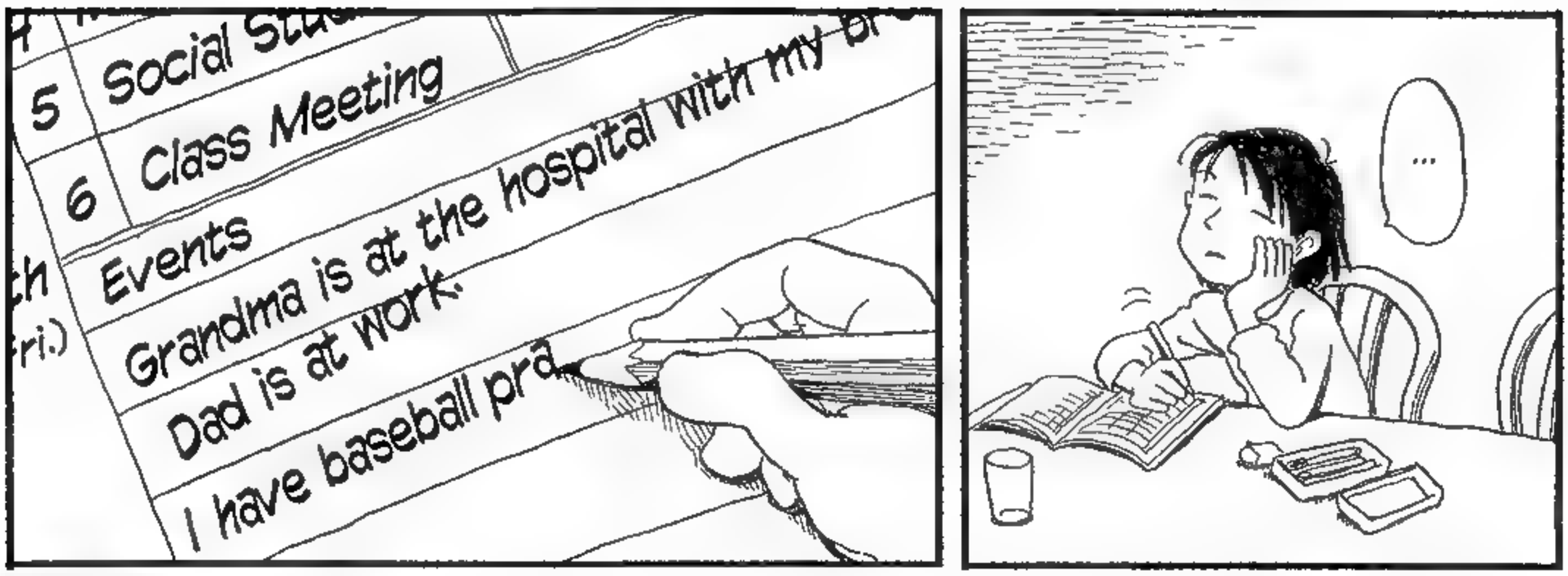
1

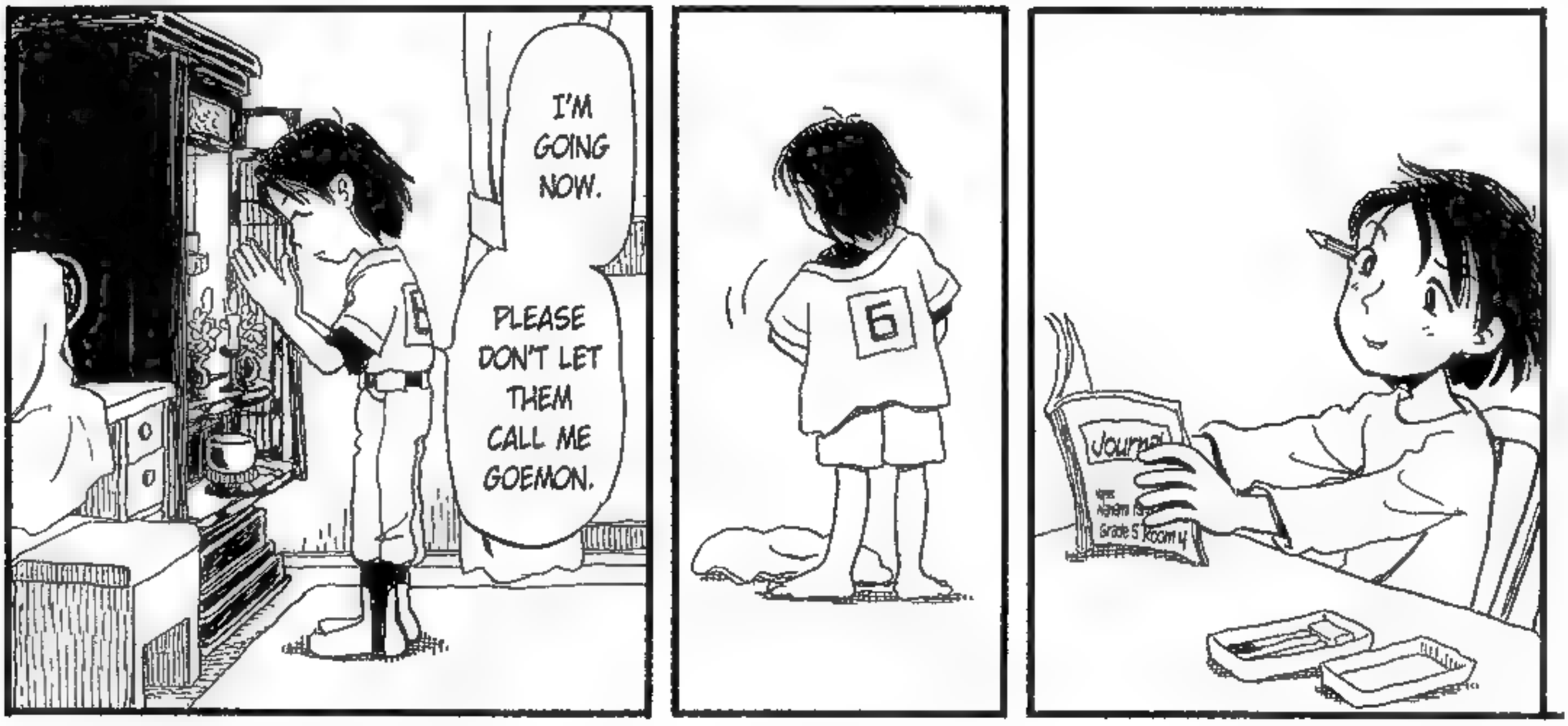
8th (Wed.)	6	Japanese	Flute	can.
Events				
Grandma is at the hospital with my brother.				
Dad is at work. I played with				
Toko Tone of Room 1				

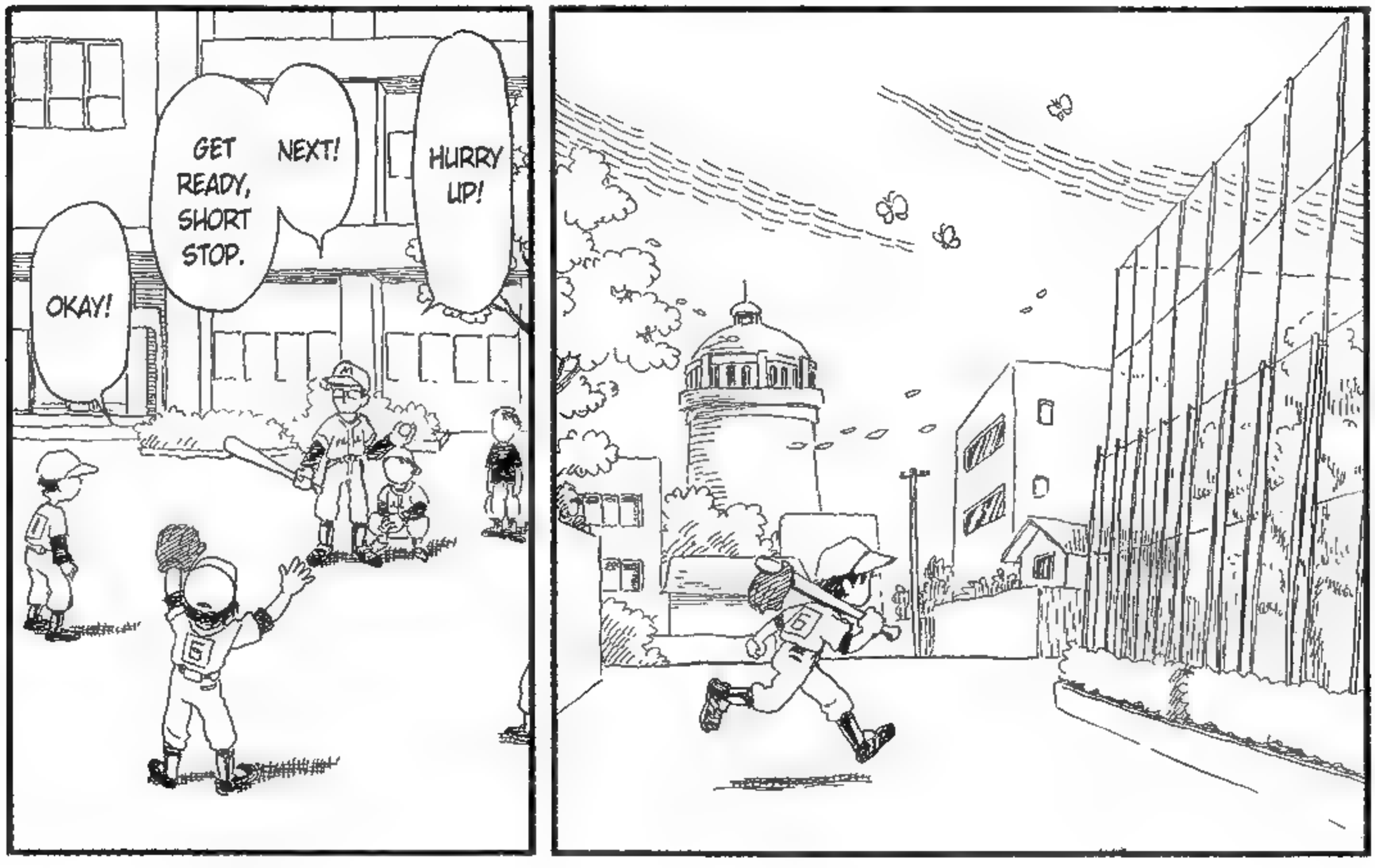
7th (Tues.)	6	Art	Paints
Events			
Grandma is at the hospital with my bro			
Dad is at work.			
I have baseball			

10th (Fri.)	6	Class Meeting
Events		

9th (ur.)	6	
Events		
Grandma is at the hospital with my brot		
Dad is at work.		
I have baseball practi		


5 Social Stu
6 Class Meeting
Events
Grandma is at the hospital with my br
Dad is at work.
I have baseball pra
...


I'M GOING NOW.
PLEASE DON'T LET THEM CALL ME GOEMON.
6
Journal
Grade 5 Room 4


GET READY, SHORT STOP.
NEXT!
HURRY UP!
OKAY!

FWSH

Smack

Plonk

OH, SORRY.

OKAY !

GOOD !!

NOW, RIGHT FIELD!

!!

ANY OF YOU FOURTH GRADERS WANT TO TAKE NANAMI'S PLACE AS SHORTSTOP?

ME!

DOHKAY.

YOUR NOSE IS BLEEDING. GO SIT AND REST.

COACH ...?

PAY ATTENTION!

READY ?

...

C'MON, RUN!

西武鉄道
新井薬師前駅
Araiyakushimae Station

...

.....

M

M

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE BALL!!

WHAT ?!

CAN I BORROW 200 YEN ?

TOKO.

Station

WANT TO COME?

HM?

...

...

I'M OFF THEN!

...

SURE... WHAT FOR?

OH, JUST A LITTLE EXCURSION, MY DEAR.

LOOK, NANAMI.

ARE THOSE THEIR SCHOOL UNIFORMS?

YES.

WOW. YOU'LL LOOK GREAT IN IT.

REALLY?

THAT'S THE SCHOOL MY MOM WENT TO.

WHEN I'M IN SIXTH GRADE I'LL TAKE THE ENTRANCE EXAM FOR THEIR MIDDLE SCHOOL.

MORGUE

...

ARE YOU SURE IT'S THIS WAY?

UM ...

THAT'S A LOT OF PRESSURE.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL GET IN. BUT IF I DON'T, MY MOM WILL BE SO DISAPPOINTED.

西東京総合病院
West Tokyo General Hospital

GRANDMA'S SCARY ENOUGH.

GOOD THING I DON'T HAVE A MOM.

.....

HOW SWEET YOU TWO ARE.

THE ENTRANCE IS AROUND THE CORNER. CHECK IN WITH THE RECEP-TIONIST.

ER... WE'RE HERE TO VISIT A PATIENT.

202
Saburou Tani
Nagio Ishikaw

SHHH ...

SHE THOUGHT I WAS A BOY!

YEAH?

THAT NURSE WAS PRETTY!

HEY, SIS.

NAGIO?

OH, HELLO.

THEN I'M SAFE! LOOK, TOKO FROM NEXT DOOR IS HERE, TOO.

SHE HAD TO TAKE SOME TEST AND THEN SHE WAS GOING HOME.

WHERE'S GRANDMA?

.....

IT'S MY FAVORITE PIECE.

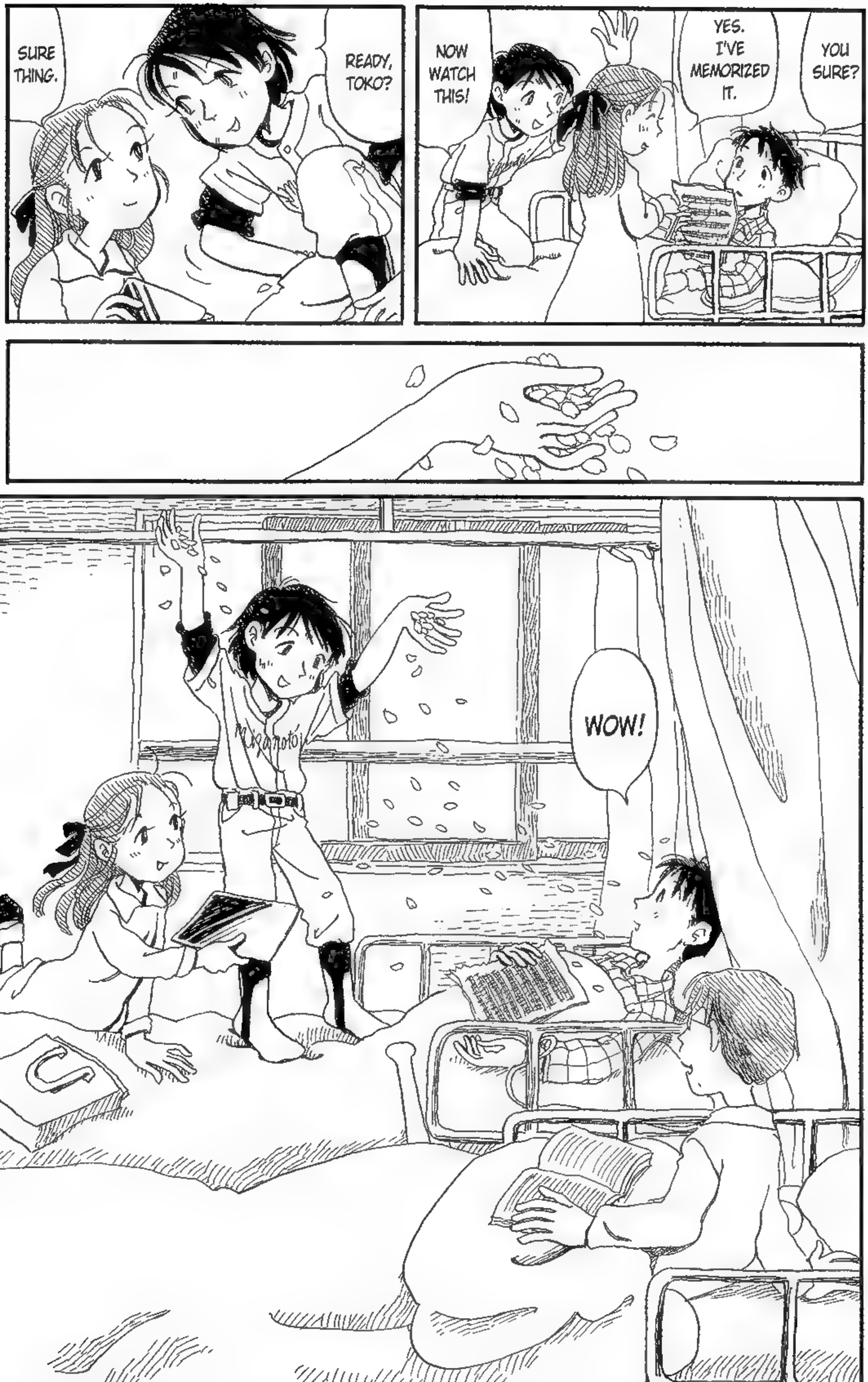
HERE.

CZERNY

RRIP

HI...

CZERNY


SURE THING.
READY, TOKO?
NOW WATCH THIS!
YES. I'VE MEMORIZED IT.
YOU SURE?
WOW!

HERE'S SOME FOR YOUR FRIEND, TOO.

SPECIAL DELIVERY! THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS FROM SCHOOL!

YAY!!

NANAMI ...

UH, SIS...

TADAA!!

Rip Rip

G-Grandma...

BONK

ME?

AND HOW ARE YOU FEELING, NANAMI?

DO YOU WANT NAGIO'S ASTHMA TO GET WORSE?

I'VE TOLD YOU NOT TO COME TO THE HOSPITAL.

YEAH, BUT...

YEAH ... OH, GRAND-MOTHER ... I FEEL ALL DIZZY.

YOU HAD A BLOODY NOSE, RIGHT?

yank

JUST KIDDING. SORRY.

GRANDMA ?

.....

COULDN'T FOOL HER...

I'M THE ONE FEELING DIZZY.

YOU THINK I DIDN'T KNOW ?

slam

...
Hi
NA
NA
MI
Hi
there
TO
TOKO
Fujimi Hiroyoshi
.....
.....
WELCOME HOME, DAD!
WHEW! BUSY, BUSY!
NANAMI.
DAD...?
.....

I'M SORRY, TOKO. YOU GOT IN TROUBLE, DIDN'T YOU?

MAYBE IT'S A NEW STRATEGY.

DAD DIDN'T SAY A WORD ABOUT IT.

NO, I LOOK TIRED ...

ME?

HUH?!

THE GAME'S ON. YOU CAN FINISH THAT LATER.

OH. OKAY!

SAME DIFFER-ENCE!

AREN'T YOU HAPPY HE DIDN'T CALL YOU GOEMON?

WHAT?!

COACH SAYS YOU HAVE TO DO TEN LAPS AROUND THE SCHOOL FOR MISSING PRACTICE.

HEY, GOE!

THE ONE ON YOUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE?

RIGHT.

... BECAUSE I WAS UP LATE RE-WRITING MY ESSAY.

SO?

WHAT WILL YOU WRITE ABOUT, NANAMI?

Some-how I never got around to hearing about Toko's dreams.

He just had too much on his mind. But I didn't realize that until much later.

It wasn't that Dad had chosen not to scold me.

Dreams for the Future

Grandma's test results from that day weren't good. She died that summer.

WHAT, MY DREAMS?

NOT TELLING!

IT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU PUT IN AN ESSAY.

THAT'S WHY I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO WRITE.

THEN I'M NOT TELLING EITHER.

By autumn, Nagio had to commute regularly to the hospital, so we moved to a place close by.

YOU WANT SOME MORE?!

STUPID! UGLY! GOEMON!

That's enough...

By winter I'd long since given up trying.

I'M NANAMI ISHIKAWA AND I MOVED HERE FROM NAKANO.

I'M QUITE FOND OF BASEBALL. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU ALL.

My dream, the one I couldn't talk about, was to become a well-behaved girl like Toko.

Country of Cherry Blossoms 2

Sakura no Kuni Part 2

THEY HAVE A MAN ON FIRST.

GIANTS DOWN BY TWO. IN THE TOP OF THE FIFTH.

HE HITS IT!

AND IT'S A FASTBALL INSIDE.

THE THIRD PITCH IS A BALL.

THAT WAS A SLIDER.

AGAIN?! I ALWAYS LOSE!

OH NO!

THAT'S ETO'S SECOND HIT OF THE DAY.

DOWN THE THIRD BASE LINE. AND THAT WILL BE A DOUBLE.

HIROSHIMA IS CHANGING PITCHERS.

OH!

.....

I WILL.

NAGIO, MAKE SURE TO WASH THEM GOOD.

DAD, YOU THINK THE CARP WILL BE THE NEXT TO GO BECAUSE OF ALL THAT TALK OF CHANGING THE LEAGUE SYSTEM?

I'M GLAD ETO'S DOING WELL, BUT...

...

SHE'S A NURSE NOW.

I SAW HER THE OTHER DAY.

.....

WERE THEY IN HERE?.

...

SHE ENDED UP NOT GOING TO THAT JUNIOR COLLEGE.

I THOUGHT HER SCHOOL ONLY HAD A LITERATURE DEPARTMENT.

WHATEVER.

HEY, REMEMBER YOUR FRIEND TOKO TONE?

電話株式会社
東京支店

石川 旭様

Phone Bill

次回口座振替のお知らせ

平成16年 6月30日発行

次の金額を平成 16年 7月16日 ご指定の口座より振替させていただきま

平成16年6月分

次回振替額 ¥27,930

金額 (円)

NAGIO...TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

WHATEVER ?! WEREN'T YOU GOOD FRIENDS?!

OUT FOR A WALK. THAT'S ALL HE TOLD ME.

HE CAME BACK DIRTY AND SUN-BURNT.

LAST WEEK WHILE YOU WERE AWAY ON CALL, HE DIDN'T COME HOME FOR TWO DAYS.

YOU'RE OUT SO MUCH YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED, BUT DAD'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE RECENTLY.

IT'S FIVE TIMES MORE THAN LAST MONTH.

HEH ...

I GUESS I CAN COUNT ON MY BROTHER THE HATCHLING DOCTOR! ALL MY SUPPORT IS PAYING OFF!

HE DID JUST RETIRE... MAYBE I SHOULD GET HIM CHECKED OUT AT OUR HOSPITAL.

ALL KIDDING ASIDE, HE MIGHT BE STARTING TO LOSE IT.

HA HA! THAT'S A GOOD ONE!!

YOU THINK HE FOUND HIMSELF A LADY FRIEND?!

HATCHLING?! I'M NOT EVEN A FLEDGLING?!

OH, NO! WE LOST THE LEAD!

NOW WHAT WAS I DOING ?

.....

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

DAD, I CUT UP A PEACH.

Right. A peach.

Umk...

FAMILY ISSUES TO DEAL WITH.

I'LL PASS.

NANAMI, WANT TO GO TO ROPPONGI HILLS TOMORROW?

LOOKING FOR SOME-THING?

.....

DID YOU EAT ANY TODAY, DAD?

I THOUGHT WE STILL HAD SOME PEACHES LEFT.

HUH?

I FELT LIKE TAKING A WALK ANYWAY.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, DAD.

WHAT ?

IF YOU WANT PEACHES, I'LL JUST POP OUT AND GET YOU SOME.

SORRY.

OH, MAYBE I DID!

SLAM

FINE... SEE YA...

I'LL GO CHECK ON HIM.

NAGIO, DAD WENT FOR A WALK AGAIN.

.....

301
Ishikawa

WHAT'S UP WITH HIM? HE'S EVEN GLOOMIER THAN USUAL.

...

西東京総合病院
救急・労災指定
駅北口徒歩3分(西東京市
皮膚科
耳鼻咽喉科
眼科
内科
小児科
産婦人科
救急科

駅南口

AGH! GET OFF ME!!

NANAMI ?!

ODD PLACE TO TAKE A WALK.

THAT'S HIM RIGHT THERE, ISN'T IT?

UM, WELL. I'M KIND OF TAILING MY DAD.

IT IS YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HUH? TOKO!?

OH... THANKS.

HE BOUGHT A ¥220 TICKET.

...

HANG ON A SEC.

SO UH, I'VE GOT TO GO...

NO, I JUST HAPPENED TO BE THERE TODAY.

DO YOU COME TO THAT AREA OFTEN, TOKO?

WHAT AN ODD WAY TO RUN INTO EACH OTHER.

...

...

RIGHT!

YOU'D BETTER HURRY OR YOU'LL MISS THE TRAIN!

.....

MIND IF I TAG ALONG?

NANAMI ...

THANKS AGAIN.

THIS IS YOUR STOP, ISN'T IT?

NEXT STOP, ARAIYA KUSHI-MAE.

JR

東京駅

Tōkyō Station

八重洲中央口

UM... OF COURSE NOT.

JR山手線のりかえ口

広島駅

Hiroshima Station

.....

夜行便

バス名 | 発

高速バス のりば

2

HIRO

広島駅

.....

GUESS I'LL GO HOME. I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY ON ME.

.....

LUCKY THERE WERE SEATS LEFT.

HERE'S YOUR TICKET.

YOU HAVE TOMORROW OFF, DON'T YOU?

EXCUSE ME!

BUT ...

WHAT ?!

I'LL LEND YOU SOME.

...

...I guess.

THANKS ...

I'VE GOT ANOTHER.

KEEP IT ON.

WHEW. MADE IT.

OH, NAGIO?

I HOPE A CERTAIN INTERN ISN'T MAKING THINGS TOO HARD FOR YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT! YOU'RE A NURSE.

EVERYONE'S FOND OF HIM. THEY CALL HIM GOEMON.

NO. THEY'LL JUST THINK I'M ON NIGHT SHIFT.

SHOULDN'T YOU LET YOUR FAMILY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?

TOKO?

I THINK HE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE YOU!

NO WAY!!

HA HA ...

HIM TOO? MAKES SENSE. HE'S NOT VERY GOOD-LOOKING.

I wish I hadn't run into her.

LET'S SLEEP. I DON'T WANT HIM TO NOTICE ME.

SURE.

YES.

IT'S REALLY BEEN A LONG TIME, HASN'T IT?

THAT'S WHY I RECOG-NIZED YOU RIGHT AWAY EVEN AFTER 17 YEARS.

..they gave off the sunny fragrance of our old neighborhood with its streets lined with sakura trees.

GRANDMA. ARE YOU IN PAIN?

OH... ...A FRIEND OF MIDORI'S?

I'M SORRY. MIDORI HASN'T COME HOME YET.

WHO... ARE YOU?

GRAND MA. IT'S ME, NANAMI.

DID YOU TAKE YOUR MEDICINE ?

Her clothes ...her hair...

GRAND MA...

HOW DID YOU SURVIVE?

WHERE WERE YOU?

AND YOU... ?

YOU NEVER CAME ON FIELD TRIP FROM SCHOOL?

WHAT ?

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME IN HIROSHIMA. IT'S ONLY MORNING BUT IT'S ALREADY SWELTERING.

JR 広島駅
HIROSHIMA STATION

I HAVE NO IDEA.

WHO'S THAT?

...

...

...

...

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE READY. HERE'S MY NUMBER!

RIGHT. GOOD IDEA!

THAT STREETCAR WILL TAKE ME THERE, RIGHT?

SINCE I'M HERE, MAYBE I'LL GO VISIT THE PEACE PARK.

バス

月寺

WHEW...

.....

1945, Aug
6th Suzuko age 2

1945, Augu
6th Furao age 1

1945, August
10th Tamao age 1

1976, January
10th Yukio age 50

1945, August 7th Terma age 41

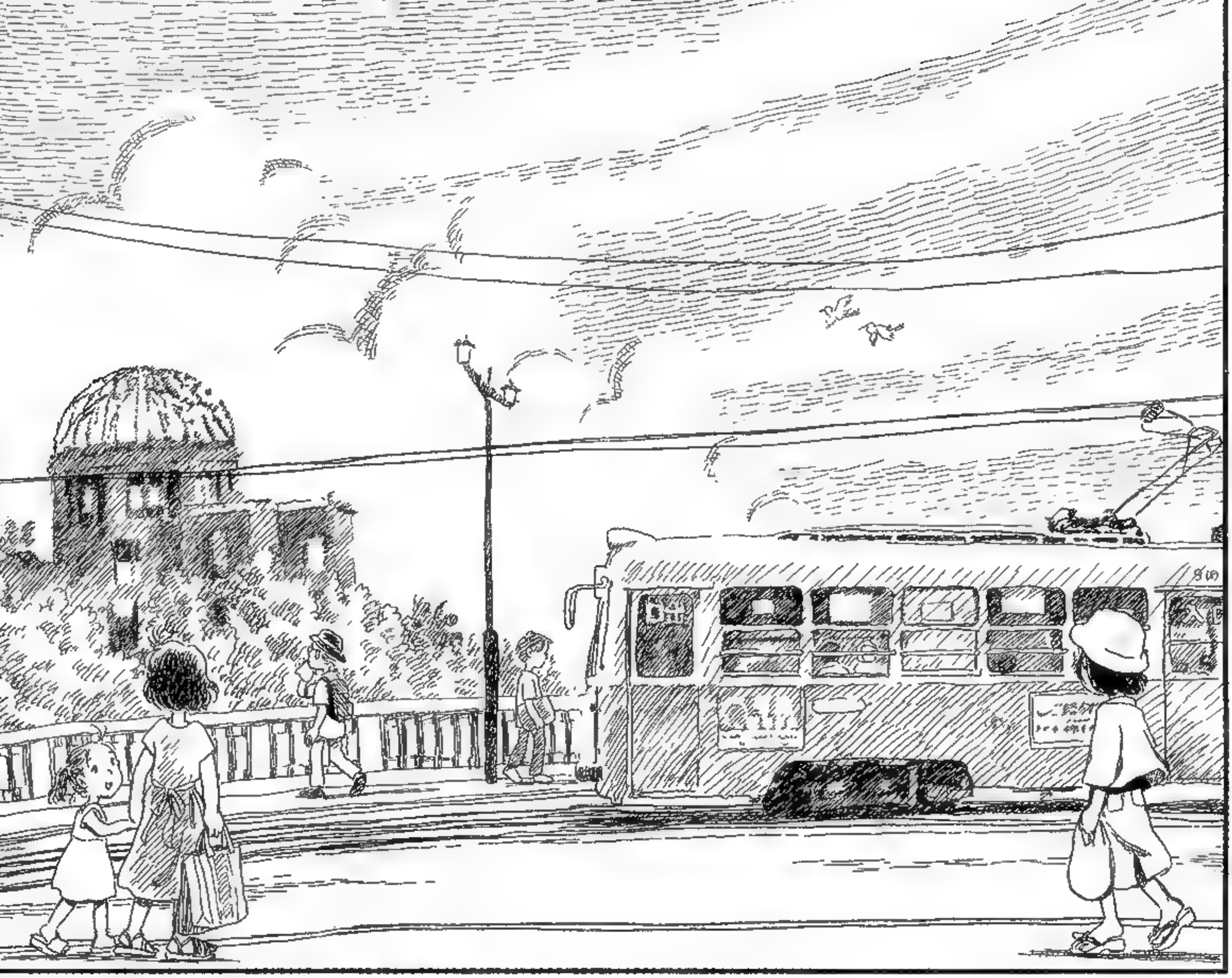
1945, August 6th Midori age 12

1945, October 11th Kasumi age 15

1955, September 8th Minami age 23

1987, August 27th Fujimi age 80

Hirano Family Grave



OH.

?

I SHOULD CALL TOKO.

DEAR TOKO,

YOUR PARENTS CAME BY TODAY AND

TOLD ME NOT TO SEE YOU ANYMORE.

Toko Tone

-Nagio Ishikawa

I AM COMPLETELY HEALTHY NOW.

MY SISTER IS NOW AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN HEALTHY.

GOODBYE,

NAGIO ISHIKAWA

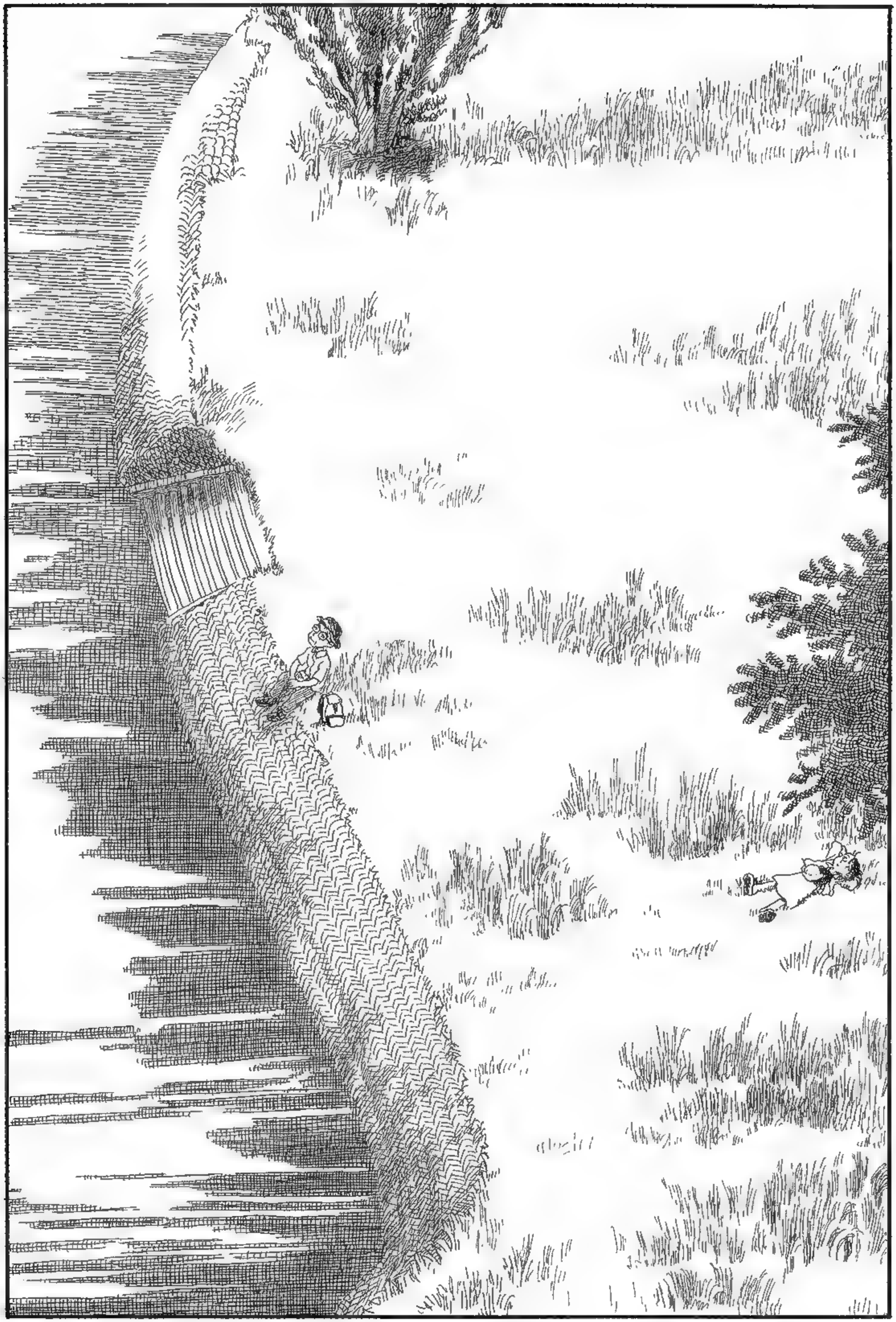
AS FOR MY ASTHMA, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT WAS CAUSED BY THE ENVIRONMENT OR WHETHER IT WAS SOMETHING I WAS BORN WITH.

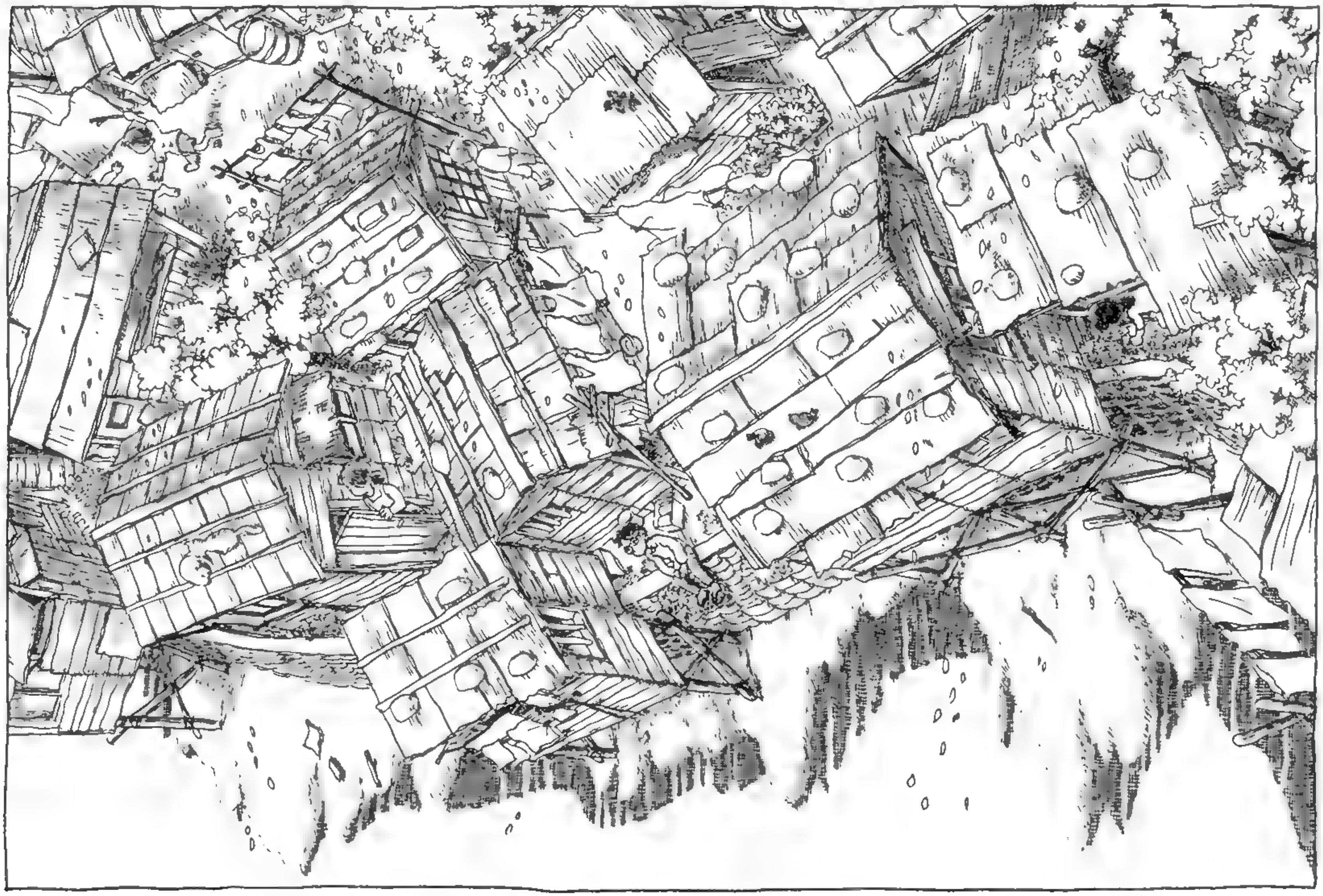
THAT'S WHY I UNDERSTAND. I HAVE NO RIGHT TO CAUSE YOUR PARENTS GRIEF OR MAKE YOU BETRAY THEM.

THEY LOVED ME, JUST AS YOUR PARENTS LOVE YOU.

EVERYTHING I AM I OWE TO MY GRANDMOTHER, FATHER, AND SISTER.

THAT'S WHY TOKO INSISTED ON COMING...





ASAHI, YOU'RE ALREADY HERE.

IT'S BEEN AWHILE, MOTHER.

MRS. HIRANO.

EXCUSE ME. DO YOU KNOW WHERE FUJIMI HIRANO LIVES?

Resist Eviction!

THANK YOU.

YES.

YOU SHOWED HIM THE WAY, KYOKA?

UH...

WELCOME.

I'M KYOKA OTA.

MY NAME'S ASAHI ISHIKAWA. I'LL BE LIVING HERE FOR A WHILE. NICE TO MEET YOU.

...

THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY IS TOMORROW.

WHEN DO YOU START AT THE UNIVERSITY?

YES, THAT WAS A FINE GREETING.

WAS THAT OKAY?

HERE, KYOKA. SOME DRIED PLUM TREATS.

WHY THANK YOU.

THERE, GOT IT!

OKAY!

PEEL OFF THE BAMBOO FIRST!

...

THEY'RE FROM MITO. SHARE THEM WITH MOTOHARU.

A NEIGHBOR-HOOD KID?

YES. SHE COMES ONCE IN A WHILE TO HELP ME OUT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THINK HE'D LIKE A BASEBALL GLOVE?

SO SHE HAS AN OLDER BROTHER.

NOW IT'S JUST HER AND HER BROTHER. HE JUST GRADUATED FROM JUNIOR HIGH.

AS YOU CAN SEE, SHE'S JUST A WEE BIT SLOW. I WORRY ABOUT HER BECAUSE HER FATHER PASSED AWAY THE OTHER DAY.

HA HA HA...

ASAHI, WILL YOU TEACH MY BROTHER BASE-BALL SO HE CAN JOIN THE CARP?

YOU'RE GOOD, KYOKA.

ANY CLOTH WILL DO?

JUST LIKE THIS?

THAT'S RIGHT.

I'LL BE BACK SOON.

.....

YES ...

MY DALIGHTER WAS ALL THUMBS.

YOU HAVE A GOOD APPRENTICE, MOTHER.

KNOW THE GIRL WHO USED TO LIVE HERE? SHE WAS MY SISTER.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHO SHE IS, EVEN THOUGH OUR LAST NAMES ARE DIFFERENT.

YEAH, BUT ...

YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE NOT FROM HERE.

OH, REALLY?

LIKE SOMEONE ON TV.

ASAHI ?

WHY DO YOU CALL HER MOTHER ?

I HAD TO STAY LATE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES YESTERDAY. TODAY WAS FOR MATH.

EVEN COLLEGE STUDENTS GET HOME EARLIER.

HI.

YOU SURE GET HOME LATE THESE DAYS.

WOW. I CAN FEEL THE BUMPS.

TEACHER BEAT ME WITH THE BAMBOO POLE SO MUCH, I'M TALLER NOW.

THAT'S WHY I'M SO SLOW.

...

WHEN I WAS A BABY... I GOT CAUGHT IN THE FLASH.

PEOPLE ARE TOO QUICK TO BLAME THINGS ON THE BOMB.

.....

YES.

YOUR TEACH-ER, TOO ?

EVERYONE SAYS SO.

WHO TOLD YOU THAT?

.....

I COULD TUTOR YOU! PERHAPS.

CARE TO SHOW ME YOUR TEXT-BOOK?

...

I'LL HELP YA.

ER...LET'S SEE THAT BOOK.

THEY MAKE HER STUDY SO MUCH AT SCHOOL, AND NOW YOU WANT HER TO STUDY MORE.

YOU THINK KYOKA'S MAD?

OH.

SHE CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOUR FANCY EASTERN ACCENT.

SILLY.

THE WAY YOU TALK, YOU MAKE 'EM SOUND LIKE SOME FANCY SCHMANCY FRUIT.

YEAH, BUT...

HEY, BE SERIOUS.

HANAKO HAS THREE ORANGES AND ONE APPLE.

TARO BOUGHT THREE APPLES.

HA HA HA.

HEE HEE ...

.....

Toko!

Over here.

GOTCHA!

FIGURE OUT HOW MUCH THEY COST. **THEN** TELL ME IF THEY'RE SO FANCY!

6th grade Math

hmm...

hmm...

The area between Figure 6 6 and the S axis lies in an unbounded domain. Determine the area .

Kyoka, are you asleep?

Listening to you makes me feel like I'm in Tokyo.

YOU WERE THERE FOR A WHILE.

WENT TO THE PEACE MUSEUM.

SO WHAT'D YOU DO?

I swiped it.

LOOK. A PEACH.

.....

DID YOU EAT? I BOUGHT SOME RICE BALLS.

GLAD YOU FOUND ME.

AGH!

BLEEEGH

koff koff

T-TOKO, ARE YOU OKAY?!

.....

Hotel Kawano

.....

HOTEL

ホテル

Let's see...

204

205

御休憩

御宿泊

いらっしゃいませ

...

A ROOM PLEASE.

203

203

...NA
...
...MI
...

YOU'RE HOME, NA...

MOM...?

OH.

TAKE IT OFF ... I'LL WASH IT.

NO ...

I'LL DO IT.

AGH ....!

I'M SO SORRY, NANAMI.

WHEN I THOUGHT HOW IT COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE BEEN MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

.....

I'M A FAILURE AS A NURSE.

YOU CAN WEAR THAT.

.....

...

YOUR REACTION IS PROBABLY THE DECENT ONE.

DON'T WORRY.

ONCE IN A WHILE.

one

Ishikawa

YOU COME TO THIS KIND OF HOTEL OFTEN?

LET'S SEE...

SHOULD BE A DRYER OVER THERE.

WE MIGHT AS WELL TAKE A BATH HERE.

AND THE BATH IS RIGHT IN THE ROOM.

OH!

I DIDN'T NEED TO KNOW THAT.

NAH. DIDN'T FEEL LIKE IT.

YOU SHOULD HAVE NAPPED, TOO, NANAMI.

WE LOST SIGHT OF YOUR DAD.

I'M SORRY

I FEEL EVEN LESS LIKE TALKING ABOUT NAGIO.

She's seen us both now ...

YOU HAVE NICE LONG LEGS, YOU AND YOUR BROTHER BOTH.

I'M SO ENVI-OUS.

...IN HIRO-SHIMA.

WE'VE GOT AN UNCLE HERE...

.....

HE WAS ON A BUS GOING TOWARD MIYAJIMA. I BET HE'S STOPPING BY UNCLE MOTOHARU'S BEFORE HEADING HOME.

DON'T WORRY. I HAVE AN IDEA WHERE HE WENT.

cs and Goods Futaba Clothier

SEAMSTRESS WANTED! ROOM PROVIDED. -FUTABA

MY BROTHER GOT MARRIED SO I THOUGHT IT'S TIME I MOVED OUT.

SEAMSTRESS WANTED! ROOM PROVIDED. -FUTABA

Founded 50 years ago Futaba Clothier

YOU DO?

KYOKA, WHY DON'T YOU MOVE IN WITH US?

OH...

PLUS, YOU CAN USE THE SEWING MACHINE.

YOU'D BE A HELP TO MOTHER, TOO.

I'M GRATE FUL TO YOU, YOU KNOW.

AFTER HAVING BEEN AWAY FROM MOTHER FOR SO LONG, IT WAS A LITTLE AWKWARD FOR ME WHEN I CAME BACK. IT HELPED THAT YOU WERE OVER SO OFTEN.

.....

.....

YOU KNOW ...

AND I'D BE... UH...

YOU INTEND TO MARRY A HIBAKUSHA VICTIM?

GOODNIGHT.

I'M...NOT REALLY SURE.

OH, WHY CAN'T I DIE?

AND HOW WOULD I EXPLAIN THIS TO YOUR ISHIKAWA PARENTS?

WHY DO YOU THINK WE SENT YOU AWAY TO BE RAISED BY OTHERS ?

MOTHER ...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY MORE PEOPLE I KNOW DIE FROM THE BOMB.

.....

.....

.....

HE WAS ON A DIFFERENT BUS.

BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE, SO I TAGGED ALONG WITH YOU.

I WAS ON MY WAY TO SEE A CERTAIN PERSON.

NANAMI? YESTERDAY, I...

WE DIDN'T HAVE TO DISGUISE OURSELVES!

oh boy!

ONCE THEY'RE HERE, I'M SURE THEY'LL COME TO LIKE HIROSHIMA.

I'M GLAD I DID, THOUGH.

NEXT TIME I'LL BRING MY PARENTS.

.....

.....

I GUESS YOU ARE.

YOU ASLEEP?

TOKO...?

AND WHEN MY GRANDMA DIED AT AGE 80, NO ONE BLAMED IT ON THE BOMB.

NO ONE EVER EXPLICITLY SAID THAT MY MOM DIED AT 38 BECAUSE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB.

IN THE SAME WAY...

YET PEOPLE STUBBORNLY BELIEVE THAT BOTH NAGIO AND I COULD DIE AT ANY TIME BECAUSE OF THE BOMB.

...I WAS STUBBORN IN WANTING TO FORGET EVERY-THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME BACK IN OUR OLD NEIGHBORHOOD.
HELLO? IT'S ME.

RIGHT ...

西武鉄道
新井薬師前駅
Araiyakushimae Station
(南口)

JR
東京駅 八重洲中央口
Tōkyō Station

SEE YOU THERE.

宮城県立
水の森公園

YEAH ...

.....

NANAMI, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK ME ALL THE WAY HOME.

YOU KEEP SAYING THAT.

WAS THIS NEIGHBOR-HOOD ALWAYS THIS SMALL?

OH.

OW.

SIS...

WHAT ?!

NAGIO, PAY HER BACK FOR ME.

I'LL BE GOING NOW.

WHY DID YOU CALL ME OUT HERE SO EARLY IN THE MORNING...

FOUND A PINE-CONE.

.....

WHERE DID YOU SPEND THE NIGHT?

...THEN NEVER WENT HOME.

YOU QUIT YOUR JOB ...

AND WHY WITH HER?

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

Hmph!

IDIOT !

I SWEAR ...

I SEE.

THIS PLACE LOOKS SMALLER BECAUSE ALL THE SAKURA TREES HAVE GROWN BIGGER.

HEY! HER SWEATER!

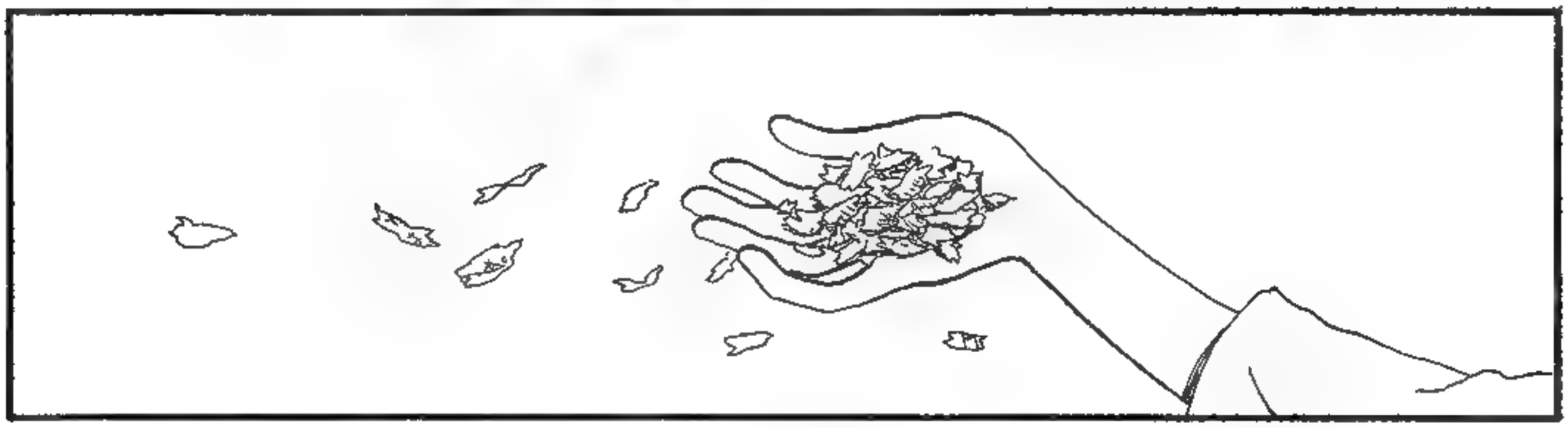
I CAN RETURN IT THE NEXT TIME I SEE HER.

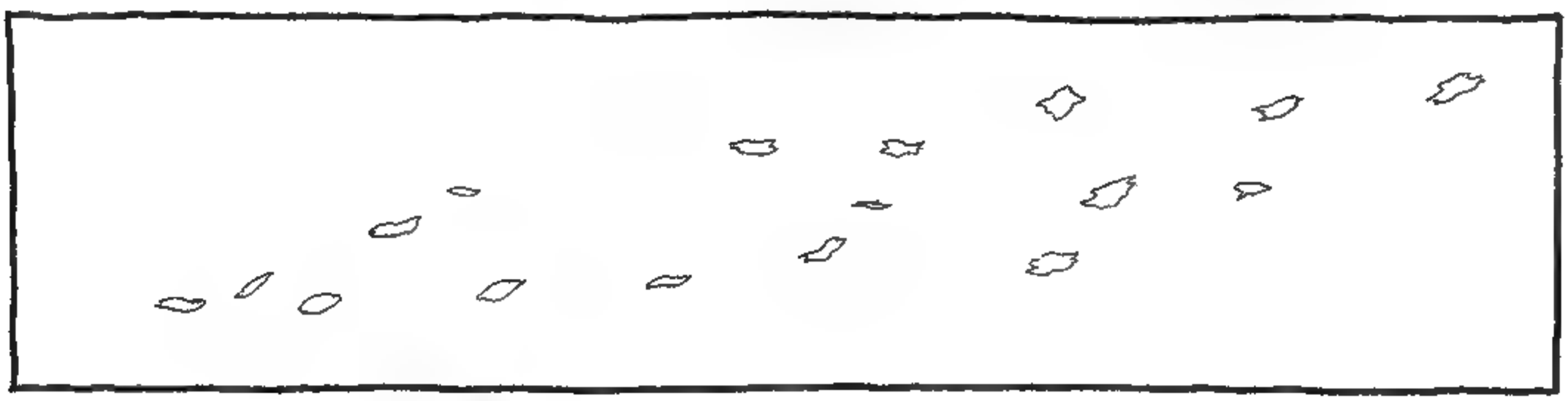
OH WELL.

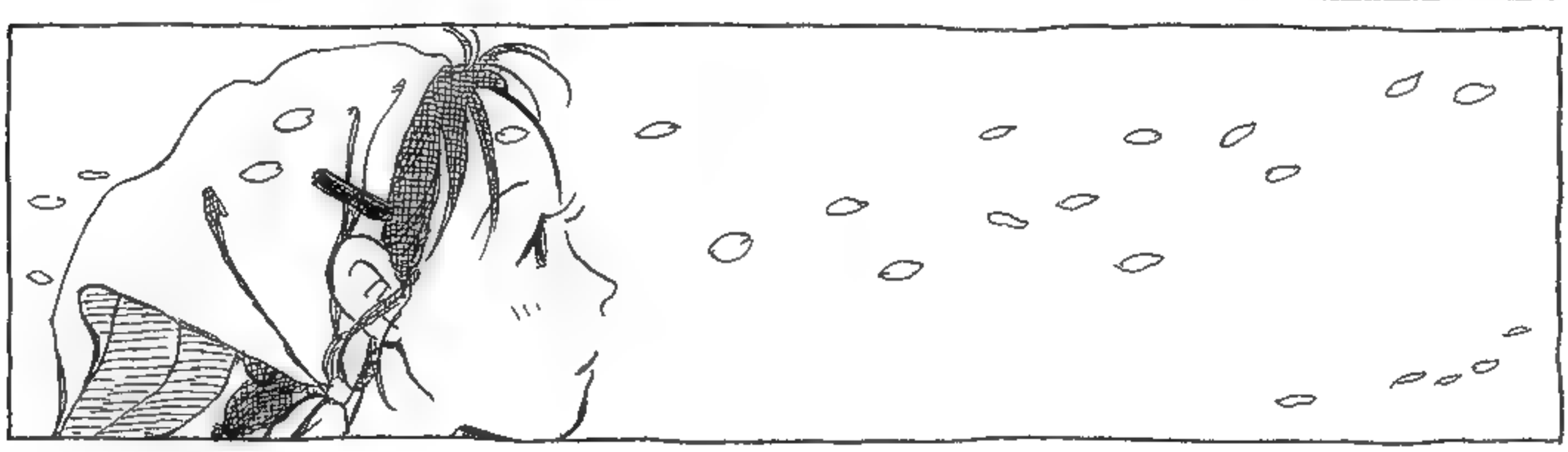
YOU'RE WATCHING, AREN'T YOU?

Toko Tone
-Nagio Ishikawa

MOM...







I SEE...

I'M TAKING MOTHER WITH ME.

AND UH... I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE... A WIFE.

WHAT?

YOU'RE BEING TRANSFERRED?

YES. TO TOKYO.

.....

.....

AND EVEN MOTHER'S BEEN SAYING THAT AS LONG AS WE'RE GOING TO BE WORRIED ANYWAY, WE MIGHT AS WELL ALL BE TOGETHER.

...I'M ALMOST 34 AND ALL.

I MEAN...

NOBODY CAME BY, HUH?

...

.....

.....

SO!

I THINK I'LL JUST GO WITH WHOEVER I LAY MY EYES ON IN THE NEXT THREE SECONDS!

I WAS JUST TEASING.

ASAHI ...

OH, KYOKA. YOU REALLY **ARE** SLOW, AREN'T YOU?

IT'S OKAY. AND YOU'RE SO THOUGHT-FUL.

SORRY.

YOU CAN BE SO PROPER.

BEING WITH YOU, EVEN I SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE SOMEONE ON TV.

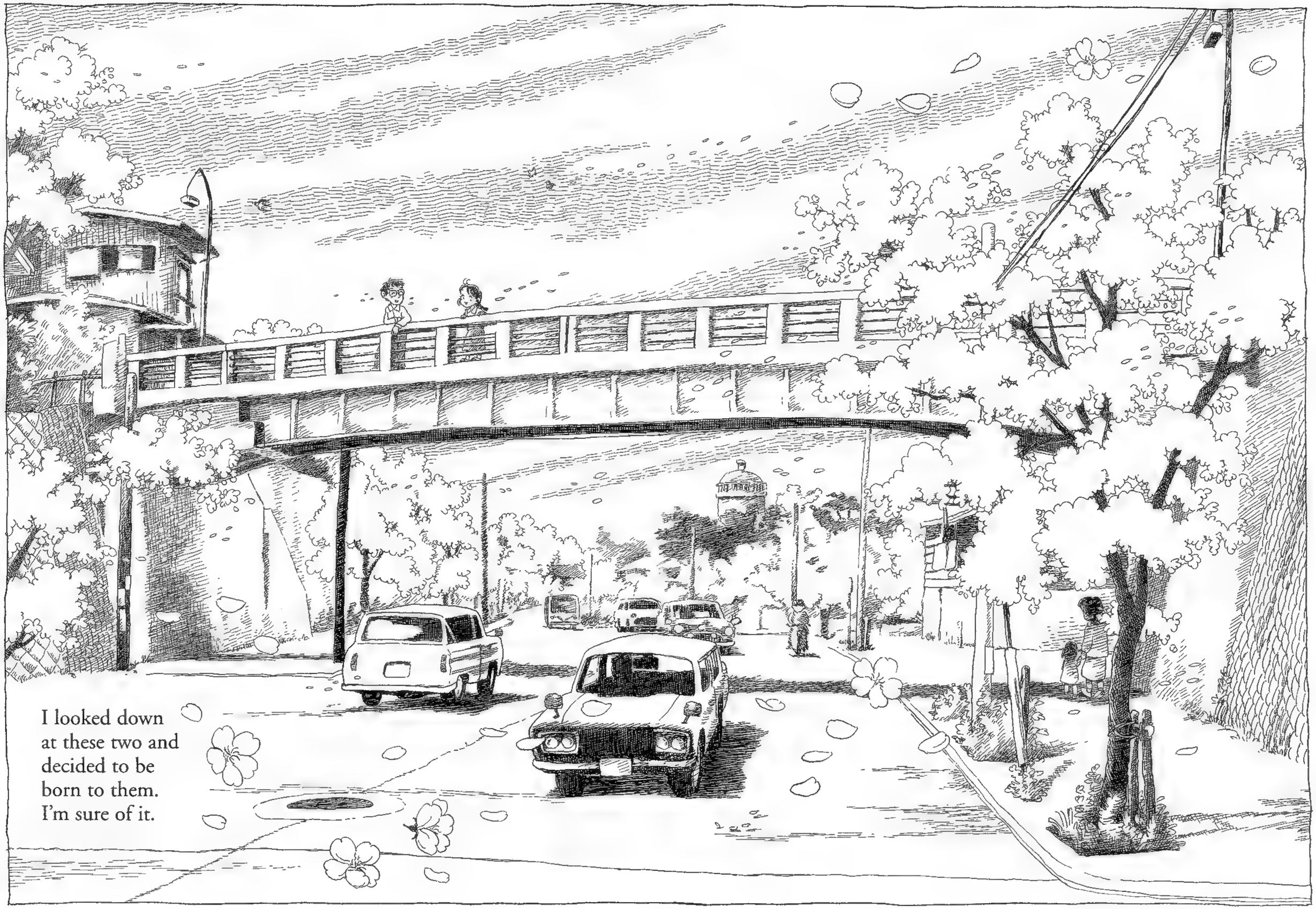
YOU EVEN GAVE ME THREE SECONDS TO HIDE IF I WANTED.

Perhaps I'd heard these stories from my mother.

...I was there, watching them.

From before I was born..

Somehow, I remember these scenes.



I looked down
at these two and
decided to be
born to them.
I'm sure of it.

yawn

西武鉄道
新井薬師前駅
Araiyakushimae Station
(南口)

I'M SORRY.

I'LL BE AN HOUR LATE.

YES ...

AH...

EVERYONE'S SO QUICK TO ASSUME YOU'RE LOSING IT.

EXCUSE ME?

BEING OLD IS SUCH A BOTHER.

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT !!

AND NOT BECAUSE I'M SENILE!!

IF I TOLD YOU, YOU'D PESTER ME TO BUY YOU THIS AND THAT. I'D NEVER REMEMBER IT ALL.

SILLY.

DID YOU THINK YOU'D SPARE NAGIO AND ME FROM WORRY-ING?

BUT DAD, WHY SNEAK OFF TO HIROSHIMA WITHOUT SAYING A WORD?

SHE REMINDS ME A LITTLE OF MOM, I THINK.

DOES SHE?

OH, THE GIRL WHO LIVED NEXT DOOR TO OUR OLD HOME.

I WAS WITH TOKO TONE.

.....

DAD...

NAGIO AND TOKO MIGHT GET MARRIED.

...

WELL ... SO, NANAMI ...

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING IN HIROSHIMA ?

I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE CRYING! IT'S 'CUZ I LOOK LIKE YOU!!

YOU'RE TWENTY-EIGHT AND YOU NEVER GO OUT ON DATES.

sniff sniff...

IT'S NOT NAGIO BUT **YOU** I'M WORRIED ABOUT.

I VISITED PEOPLE WHO KNEW HER AND ASKED THEM TO SHARE THEIR MEMORIES OF HER WITH ME.

THIS YEAR IS THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF MY LONGEST SURVIVING SISTER.

YOU KNOW, YOU REMIND ME OF HER, NANAMI.

IF YOU WANT, I COULD INTRODUCE YOU TO SOME PEOPLE IN MY SINGLES GROUP.

WHAT ?!

I KEEP LEARNING ABOUT THINGS I'D RATHER NOT KNOW!

MY BIG SISTER WOULD BE SAD IF YOU DON'T FIND HAPPINESS.

END

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Explanation by author

p. 8: The World Conference Against A & H Bombs was one of the major events that took place in Japan in 1955. The first conference was held on August 6th in Hiroshima.

p. 9: *Otomi-san* was a cheerful song sung by Hachiro Kasuga which was popular in 1954. Kasuga's autobiography was in my father's personal library. In it, Kasuga describes an episode about his wife during their poverty-stricken days, and this gave me the idea for Minami to walk to work barefoot.

p. 9-71: *Town of Evening Calm (Yûnagi no Machi)* is set in Hiroshima in 1955. Minami lives in an enclave called *Aioi Doori* (which is different from the present-day *Aioi Doori*). Referred to as the "atomic slum," many of the people who lived there lost their houses and land to the atomic bomb and the reconstruction that came later. The existence of this enclave came to an end in 1977 and is currently a greenbelt as depicted on page 70.

p. 13: Kaneyama and Hasegawa are both professional baseball players who play for the Hiroshima Carp. In the August of 1955, pitcher Ryohei Hasegawa achieved his 100th career win, and in September 1955 Jiro Kaneyama stole his 400th base. Neither Minami nor Uchikoshi are particularly baseball fans, but back then, as they are to this day, all the people of Hiroshima were fond of their beloved Carp. However, in those days, baseball wasn't on TV or radio as it is now. Most people just read about the results of the game in the newspaper on the following day. With fans of the time being as passionate as they were, they must have had great imaginations.

p. 15: Marilyn Monroe and her husband at the time, Joe DiMaggio, visited Japan in 1954. DiMaggio even visited the Carp to give them some tips.

p. 16: [trans. note: In panel 9 Minami exclaims "Oh no! Our radio show has already started!" In the original Japanese, Minami's exclamation specifically refers to the radio show *Kayo Game* (Pop Song Game). The translation of Kouno's original endnote which references *Kayo Game* follows.] The full name of *Kayo Game* was *Meishoku Kayou Game* (Brightly Colored Pop Song Game). It was a popular radio show that was broadcast on Friday nights.

p. 18: The popular pro wrestler Rikidozan had a match at Hiroshima's Kenei Sogo Ground Stadium on August 1955. Other wrestlers on the card included Azumafuji, Kokichi Endo, Ortega, Curtis, and Orton.

p. 2, p. 21: The concrete bridge railings for Heiwa Ohashi (Peace Bridge) and the Nishi Heiwa Ohashi (West Peace Bridge) were designed by Japanese American artist Isamu Noguchi in 1951. The two bridges are located in the southern part of the Peace Park. The railing on Heiwa Ohashi is entitled *Ikiru* (to live). It was formerly called *Tsukuru* (to build or create). The railing on the Nishi Heiwa Ohashi is *Shinu* (to die). Its former title was *Yuku* (to pass). At the time, people thought they were too fancy and they weren't very well received.

p. 22: The bridge depicted here is Shin Ohashi which was the predecessor to Nishi Heiwa Ohashi. It was actually a lot bigger than how it is drawn here.

p. 27: In doing research for this manga and looking at photos, I discovered that the Genbaku Dome (the Atomic Bomb Dome) has crumbled and become smaller than it was right after the bomb dropped. Some people wanted it to be destroyed to move past the misery of that day, but in 1966 it was decided that the sturcture would be preserved to serve as a reminder to future generations of the horrors of nuclear weapons. During Minami's time it was still just the ruins of a building, but I included it as a tribute to the bravery of the hibakusha who decided to preseve it as a symbol.

p. 30: *Tsuki Ga Tottemo Aoi Kara* (Because the Moon is So Bright) was a popular song during May of 1955, sung by Tsuzuko Sugawara. Uchikoshi's lines are from the first verse, and Minami's are from the third.

p. 34: It might not have been completely clear in the manga, but it is not unusual for symptoms of radiation sickness to appear years after exposure. Minami's sickness is a result of her exposure to the bomb ten years ago. Also, the express train from Mito to Hiroshima would have arrived in the morning, so Minami's aunt and brother's do not arrive in the evening when the *yûnagi* would be ending. But Minami can't see, so perhaps she believes that it is evening.

p. 37: *Country of Cherry Blossoms (Sakura no Kuni)* Part I is set in 1987 in Tokyo's Nakano District. In the background is the water tank that people called "Mizu no Tou" (Water Tower). It was built in the early Showa period (1926-1989). [trans. note: The sign for the Nakano District's Mizu no Tou Park appears on page 88 panel 4.]

p. 38: [trans. note: The girls call Nanami "Goemon" because her last name is Ishikawa. This is a reference to the historical figure Ishikawa Goemon (1558-1594) who is thought of as a Japanese Robin Hood.]

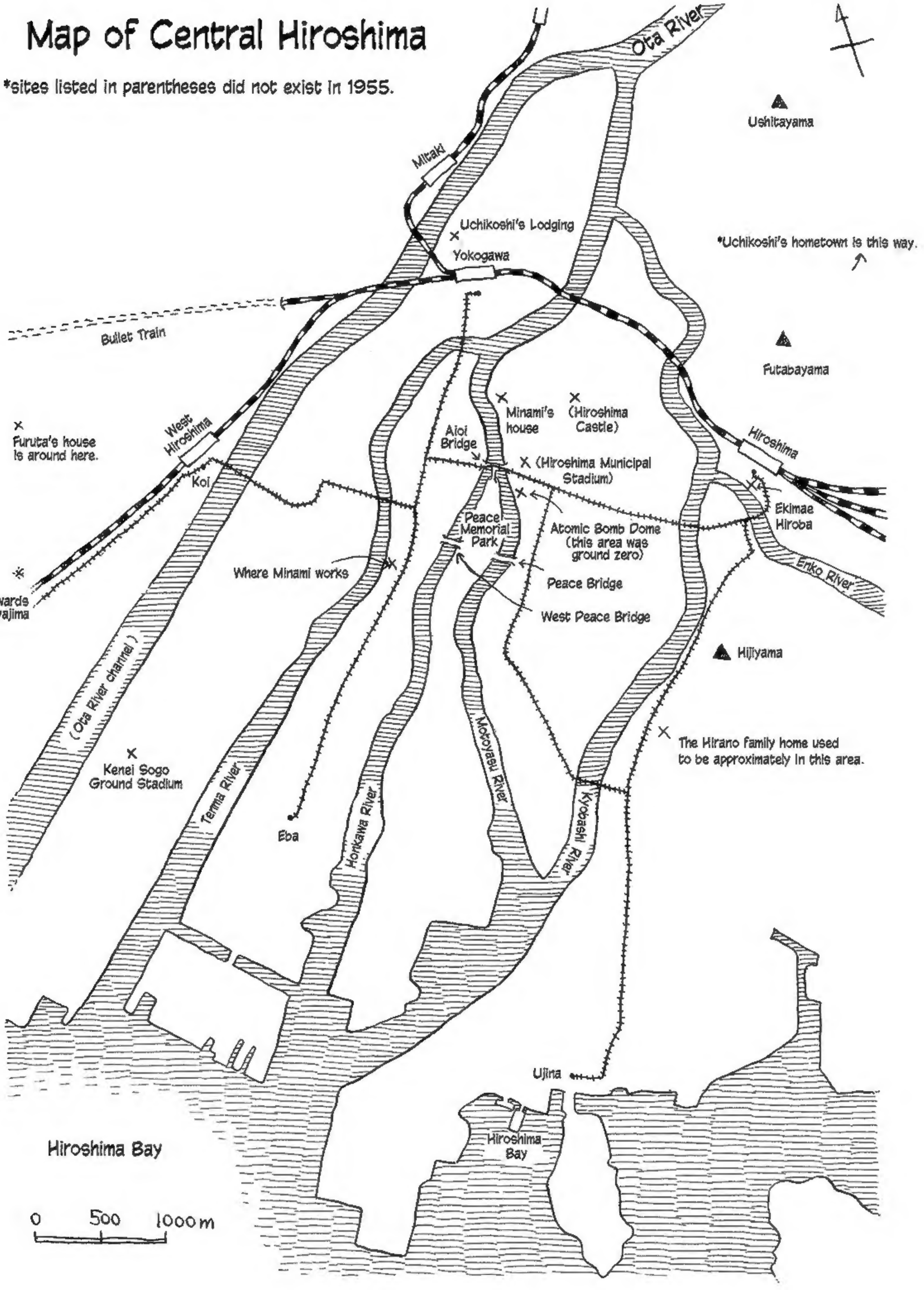
p. 39: This footbridge is called Katayamabashi. It crosses over the sakura tree-lined Nakano Road.

p. 54: Professional Baseball—*Country of Cherry Blossoms (Sakura no Kuni)* Part II is set in the summer of 2004. There was sudden talk of a move to a one league system, and everyone was quite concerned. By the way, the Hiroshima Carp have not done well these past few years.

p. 66: If you look at headstones in Hiroshima, you'll notice many marked with the date August 6th, 1945. It is sad to see that carved next to those are several more names of people who died within a few months of that date.

Map of Central Hiroshima

*sites listed in parentheses did not exist in 1955.



Afterword

"Why don't you do a story about Hiroshima?" asked my editor. That was last summer. I had just handed him an installment of my manga that was being serialized, and he broached the subject while we were chatting about going home for the holidays. Great! I thought to myself. I can use as much of the Hiroshima dialect as I want! I was excited for a moment until I realized that my editor was talking about *the* Hiroshima. I felt reluctant because when I was a student, there were a number of times when I nearly fainted– at the Peace Memorial Museum and when seeing footage of the bomb. It caused quite a commotion and ever since, I've tried to avoid anything related to the bomb.

I think I decided to go ahead and do this project because this whole time, somewhere deep inside, I've been feeling that it is unnatural and irresponsible to remain disconnected from this issue—or rather, that it is unnatural and irresponsible for me to consciously try to avoid this issue. Although I was born and raised in Hiroshima, I am neither a *hibakusha* survivor of the atomic bomb, nor am I a second generation *hibakusha*. I don't have any relatives who can talk about their experience. For me, the atomic bomb is a tragedy that occurred in the distant past. At the same time, it was a circumstance that existed in the background of "other people's households." I always thought all I needed to know about the bomb was that it was a terrifying thing that happened once upon a time, and a subject best avoided. After living in Tokyo for a while, however, I came to realize that people outside of Hiroshima and Nagasaki didn't really know all that much about the ravages of the atomic bomb. Unlike me, they weren't avoiding the subject—they never had the opportunity to learn about it even if they wanted to. Japan is the only country in the world to be hit by the bomb. (Or one of the few countries, if you include depleted uranium ammunition.) And I realized the guilt I feel for enjoying peace is far stronger than the unnatural tendancy I had as a person from Hiroshima to avoid the subject. This was no time to hold back. I hadn't experienced war or the bomb firsthand, but I could still draw on the words of a different time and place to reflect on peace and express my thoughts. This is what I had to do. Drawing manga taught me this and gave me courage. There were many expressions I wasn't used to, and I had many doubts. But I kept telling myself that drawing something is better than drawing nothing at all, and that's how I was able to do it.

My father told me a lot about how things were during the fifties, and my sister did research for me at the library in Hiroshima. Also, I can't say how encouraging it was to meet Isao Murakami. He was kind enough to answer all my ignorant questions with great care and patience. And to Mr. Sometani of Futabasha, thanks to your guidance, I was able to exceed my greatest efforts with this project. The next time I have you look at my work, I will try to be less insecure. And most importantly, thanks to those of you who read *Town of Evening Calm (Yûnagi no Machi).* This story has no end—only the feelings that these 35 pages may evoke within you will lead to the true completion of this story. As you go forth and lead full and abundant lives, I believe this story will reach a powerful conclusion. That was my hope in creating this manga.

And with *Country of Cherry Blossoms (Sakura no Kuni)*, I tried to write what I most needed to hear two years ago, when I still avoided anything to do with the atomic bomb. I truly hope this story someday finds and touches those of you who may realize you were just like me. May you grow as strong and gentle as the sakura tree.

Thank you so very much.

August 2004 on a windy midday
Fumiyo Kouno

こうの史代

Fumiyo Kouno

Fumiyo Kouno was born in 1968 in Hiroshima, Japan. She started drawing manga in junior high school. After leaving the Faculty of Science at Hiroshima University, Kouno moved to Tokyo and worked as an assistant for manga artists such as Katsuyuki Toda, Aki Morino, and Fumiko Tanigawa. She published her first manga, *Machikado Hana Dayori*, in a commercial magazine in 1995. Kouno graduated with a Humanities degree from the the Faculty of Liberal Arts at the University of the Air in 2001. She has since been earning her bread and butter with manga and illustration work.